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Thanks to

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Overview

Get a sewer-level view of the greatest city in the world—London—at the peak of her success and grandeur. It is, after all, a new century! It is 1600, old Elizabeth clings to the throne, and times have never been better for the robber, liar, pander, or sneak-thief. Why skin dogs for a living when you can skin aristocrats instead?

The Game

Coneycatchers is a game about a group of hardscrabble ne'er-do-wells building a criminal enterprise across the metropolis of Elizabethan London. As in its source game, **Blades in the Dark**, there will be crossbites, murders and anti-murders, cullionly foists, and all manner of nefarious conveyances from coney to catcher. We play to find out if our young gecks and dells, so fresh to the upright world, will thrive or quail before their fierce and cracking rivals, or the hated blue-coated Beaks with their filthy prisons. Or—and we must be honest here—if they will fall to their own vices as so many criminals do, for a bullyrook loves to trug, and to gamble, and to drink sauced wine laden with hemp. I suppose we shall see.

Touchstones

Plays: Elizabethan and Jacobean plays with grounded, lower class characters like The Merry Wives of Windsor, Henry IV parts 1 and 2, The Shoemaker's Holiday, Westward Ho, The Honest Whore, The Roaring Girl, or A Chaste Maid in Cheapside

FIlms: Elizabeth: The Golden Age, Shakespeare in Love, City of God, The Sting, Hard to Be a God

TV: Gunpowder, Elizabeth R, Wolf Hall, Hustle, Sneaky Pete, Peaky Blinders

The Players

As in **Blades**, each player creates a character and works with the other players to create the crew to which their characters belong. Each player strives to bring their character to life as an interesting, daring rascal that reaches boldly beyond their current comfort and condition. This is the players' core responsibility: they engage with the premise of the game, seeking out interesting opportunities for crime in the peripatetic city—taking big risks against powerful foes and sending their characters into danger.

The players work together with the Game Master to establish the tone and style of the game by making judgment calls about the mechanics, dice, and consequences of actions. They take responsibility as co-authors of the game with the GM.

The Characters

The rascals attempt to develop their crew from a ragtag group of poor independents to a serious criminal organization with established turf. They do this by taking illegal jobs from clients, planning their own devious missions, making alliances, destroying their enemies, and trying to stay one step ahead of the Beaks. There are several character types to choose from, each representing a different style of criminal:

- Crossbiters are actors—that is, professional liars.
- Rufflers are dangerous housebreakers.
- Foists are daring street thieves.
- Jades are merchants, fences, and body-buriers.
- Palliards are professional beggars, and sometimes more.
- Panders are sex workers and manipulators.

Character types aren't unique. You can mix and match, or play a crew that is all of one type. It's up to you.

Coneycatchers

Opportunistic ne'er-do-wells and rascals

Some crews are roarers and scuts after the big score, or the hard people doing hard things, and may 'Od bless them. Us? We're the punks and punkateeros, the crossbiters and clapperdudgeons, the ones after the small score, the soft people doing soft things. We catch coneys and, when we cut true, the coneys thank us for the custom.

When you play a crew of Coneycatchers, you earn xp when you execute a successful con game, burglary, espionage, or crossbiting operation.

Are you confidence tricksters, cutpurses, housebreakers, rakes and wantons, or a mixed bag?

Brief Session Overview

A session of Coneycatchers should find the crew in a swirl of competing pressures. Perhaps they are hungry and at wit's end. Perhaps rival gangs scheme and test them—or unwittingly present their soft underbellies. Perhaps old debts come due, or old feuds re-ignite. Nothing should be certain and everything should be up for grabs. Filthy, wonderful London is a character herself, living and breathing at the center of the mess, her streets and alleys (and river) a map to fortune and calumny.

The grift--the actual criminal jobs played out with daring, aplomb, and sometimes violence--follows a well-defined structure across a dozen useful variants. Your crew can, of course, invent your own as well.

Disclaimer the First

Coneycatchers is built on **Blades in the Dark**. Familiarity with the source game is assumed. Some small changes were made to make things more miserable and stressful, but a good rule of thumb is to defer to **Blades** if you are ever in doubt.
Here are the areas where things have changed:

- There are completely new playbooks to reflect the setting. Actions and Attributes have been streamlined for a grittier feel. Historical backgrounds and heritages are provided.
- Coneycatchers form a new type of crew.
- Scores are ennumerated in great detail, with an emphasis on con games.
- There are new Downtime options, and new entanglements.
- New player and GM advice appropriate to a low-level historical game is also provided.

Disclaimer the Second

This setting plays fast and loose with history. If you are an Elizabethan scholar you may find buildings that won't be erected for a few years, and others that were torn down a decade earlier. Some establishments have been nudged geographically, others have changed their purpose. Some things have been made up entirely. There are also no doubt some amazing errors, but this disclaimer removes responsibility of admitting them.

Don't Panic

This is yours now. Be fearless and own it—gleefully ignore actual history in the service of fun. With that said…

A Warning

Elizabethan England is often romanticized, but in reality it fucking sucks. A random list to justify this statement: Everyone has worms and it requires an actual Act of Parliament to get divorced. Everyone is virulently antisemitic and the only Jews in England have been underground for 400 years. Only one in four men and one in ten women can read. Nobody makes the connection between letting dead dogs rot in piles and epidemics every summer. Society is rigidly stratified and your chances of advancement are slim. Animals are tortured for fun. You and everyone you know completely believes in fairies and witchcraft, as well as religious miracles. The law serves the rich and is profoundly corrupt. You have fleas. Everyone has fleas. The idea of a free press is laughable. You are probably disfigured from childhood smallpox. You can be thrown in prison for debt, for not having a job, for being too sassy. The poet John Donne got thrown in prison for marrying the wrong man's daughter. If you aren't dead by 40 you're doing really well. If you are a woman it is even worse—you were probably married at thirteen and, legally, you are the property of your husband or father. You cannot enter into contracts but you can die in childbirth,

since medicine is so crude that doing nothing often leads to better outcomes. Most of the plays, poems, and paintings are actually garbage.

You can sugar-coat these miseries if you want, or you can acknowledge and use them, but you can't say you weren't warned. In line with this warning, this setting has the potential to be a pit of sexism, racism, antisemitism and general awfulness. It is your responsibility to agree on a tone and have a clear understanding, as a group of friends, where touching on these issues will lead to compelling play and where they will cross a line. It's yours now, and if that means any or all of these hateful aspects of history are totally off the table, that is not only fine--that's actually good.

Under no circumstances use "historical accuracy" to justify anything, because that argument is almost certainly wrong, and it is definitely boring.

Welcome to London

London, 1600. You smell it before you see the steeple of St. Paul's on the horizon. The sweet odor of rot, the pungent impact of excrescence and decay, the sheer stink of so many bodies in so small a space. Imagine somewhere between one hundred and two hundred thousand souls, no one knows precisely how many, crammed tightly within Roman city walls and bursting out in every direction with no end in sight. One in twenty foreign born, mostly Flemish. Within the walls the city is unplanned and mazelike. Without, it grows explosively along the roads leading in all directions.

You pass Houndsditch, a dumping ground for rubbish and the corpses of used-up animals. In the skies wheel swarms of semi-domesticated red kites, something you've never seen before. As traffic picks up they swoop down to eat butcher's leavings in the streets. Half a mile from Aldgate and the city proper are filthy cottages and then tenements begin to sprout up in Whitechapel, amid open land rapidly being enclosed with new construction. Through Aldgate you go. Looking to your left, you catch a glimpse of illegal squatters' camps dotting the sides of Tower Hill.

The buildings get taller and the streets get narrower. There are shops and workshops facing you, and above each a kitchen and bedchamber, and then store rooms. They all face inward-looking courtyards and they look to have been built by people who are well familiar with housebreakers, rufflers, and whipjacks. They are built strong.

You wander. On Leadenhall Street you come upon a vast scrum vying for alms in front of the city granary which, not coincidentally, is also the city arsenal. You pass goldsmiths' shops and the Royal Exchange, with its amazing arcades full of goods from around the world, and then you are on Threadneedle Street, a roaring thoroughfare choked with commerce and deafening noise.

And here the rush of humanity really hits you. More people than you have ever seen in one place—people from all over the kingdom, high-born and low, there a Moor, there a German, there a hideously disfigured beggar you know laid a hand to herself to arrive in such a state, to increase her take. Some knight or minor lord with attendants in light blue livery clearing a path, waving nosegays against the stench. A ganymede, a trio of drunk apprentices, and a pretty foist that, with a nod, recognizes her own. Everyone has some business somewhere else and is in a hurry to attend to it. Every kind of good parades through the street—blocks of salt, Turkey carpets, wheels of cheese, bolts of unfinished cloth from the low countries, baskets of human waste. In it all you see opportunity.

You have a friend in London, a player in an acting company, and you wend your way up Bishopsgate to his playhouse, The Bull. It has seen better days, but a friendly face does wonders for your apprehension and after a relieved bear hug you offer to buy him a drink. Surrounded by happy actors in a dingy tavern tucked into the old wall near the gate, you open your purse to pay and find it cut and every shilling you possess gone. You have been caught like a coney, and skillfully, and as a pickpocket yourself you would not have thought it possible. Your friend laughs and tells you London has the best of everything in the world, even foists, and that you have so very much to learn.

And entirely unrelated, it turns out your friend is not merely an actor but something of a crossbiter as well, and he is not in the least shy about telling you. And he is in need of reliable friends for a certain job and is willing to front you the funds to establish yourself comfortably. It's only later, after you enthusiastically agree to join his crew, that you recall the paring knife in his hand as he embraced you, and how very full his pockets looked afterward.

Lexicon

Apple Squire
A procuror; often a pimp, madam or operator of a **stew**. Oversees a crew of **panders**.

Bawdy Basket
A wild woman or prostitute; a bawd. Also the name of a London gang.

Beak
A constable or beadle; any law enforcement officer. Collectively they are the Beaks. To "budge a beak" is to fly from justice.

Bedlam
Those thought mentally unfit for some reason will be sent to Bedlam, which is adjacent to and overseen by **Bridewell.**

Bridewell
London's prison and asylum for women and children. An open sewer runs beneath it.

Bullyrook
A decent, upstanding criminal. May or may not be **upright** .

Catchpole
An arresting officer; usually a constable's functionary.

Clapperdudgeon
A well-respected, usually elderly, beggar. Often runs street teams of urchins and **cranks**.

Clink, The
The jail into which you will be thrown if you misbehave in Southwark. Revenues from the Clink go to the Bishop of Winchester.

Coney
A fat rabbit or, in criminal parlance, an easy mark. What a **coneycatcher** catches.

Coneycatcher
Someone who catches coneys—fat rabbits—meaning a thief, swindler, or rogue.

Copesmate
A friend or ally. Also the name of a London gang claiming the north bank, London bridge, and Southwark.

Cove
A man, generally. Might be a cullionly cove if hated and an upright cove if loved. A kinching cove is a child.

Crank
A deformed, diseased, or disabled beggar who earns their coin by eliciting pity or horror. Many are deliberately manufactured. A counterfeit crank does the same, but uses artful makeup or performance. Cranks detest counterfeit cranks, and vice-versa.

Crossbiter
A confidence trickster, an actor, a liar—three synonyms for the crossbiter. A courtesy man is a crossbiter who serves as outside man in a con game—the friendly local who takes visitors under their larcenous wing.

Dell
A young woman of virtue. Some dells are coneys and some are not. Many are jealously protected by their families. Many a **doxy** plays the dell.

Demander of Glimmer
An attractive young doxy that positions potential lovers to be rolled by her accomplices, with the tavern usually getting a cut of the profits. A **ganymede** can also “demand glimmer.”

Doddypol
An idiot or fool. All coneys are doddypols; not all doddypols are coneys.

Doxy
A woman initiated into the criminal life. Typically the common law wife of a **foist**, **crossbiter**, or **jade**—or one herself.

Fleet
London’s principal debtor’s prison. “The Rules” is an adjacent area where prisoners of refinement are held.

Foist
A cut-purse or street thief. Working foists have sharpened bits of horn wrapped to their thumb for cutting purses.

Ganymede
A male prostitute.

Jack Drum’s Entertainment
To be chased out of London while a crowd beats you with sticks. Also the name of a recent play by the great John Marston.

Jade
Literally a worn-out horse, but also refers to a criminal who has gone slightly straight. A **foist** or **ruffler** that has had enough of the game might open a tavern and become a jade.

Mort
A woman, generally. A kinching mort is a little girl. An autem mort is a woman in the criminal life who has been married in a church, as opposed to a doxy, who has not.

Newgate
The prison into which you will be flung if you break law or custom in London, unless you are a debtor (in which case you’ll go to Fleet), a woman (to Bridewell), or a political (to the Tower).

Palliard
A beggar; specifically a beggar that feigns disability to elicit sympathy. Palliards are ubiquitous, invisible and unknowable and thus make wonderful agents and observers.

Pander
A prostitute; a female pander might be a **bawdy basket**, trug, stale **mort**, or a Winchester goose; a male pander might be a punk or a **ganymede**. Most prostitutes are tied to a **stew** and work for an **apple squire** or **punkateero**.

Player
An actor. Players are always men--or at least present themselves that way. It is a disreputable profession. **Crossbiters** are always players.

Punkateero
A pimp specializing in **ganymedes**.

Ruffler
A burglar or house-breaker. Rufflers have a reputation for violence and often moonlight as highway robbers.

Stew
Brothel. Also vaulting house or trugging house.

Upright
Part of the criminal fraternity; a person outside the law but “inside the family”—a tight-knit core of professional criminals that have dedicated their lives to graft and malfeasance. An upright man or woman is always a **bullyrook**, but most bullyrooks are not upright.

Ward
A district within (or without) London; a neighborhood. Gang turf tends to align with ward boundaries.

White Money
Silver coins, legally minted and honestly earned. To your average **bullyrook** all money is white money because neither mint nor **coney** knows differently.

The Characters

You are criminals by inclination, heritage, or desperation, and successful criminals are by nature lazy, and by far the easiest way to support yourselves is to rob the willing. London is full of great, fat coneys begging to be taken by a skillful hunter, and you aim to stuff your bag full.

What, exactly, is a coney? The merchant's son sent from Devon with a pouch bulging with gold, bound to study law at the Middle Temple but eager to see the sights first. A well-heeled lady with a secret friend in need of discrete associates to arrange a tryst in Paris Garden. A sailor returned from the wars with a bag full of Spanish plate and a desire to cool his ardor in the stews of the capitol. Anyone who thinks you have a trustworthy face, or a patriotic soul, or a back for honest work. You will take these people's money and, if you do your job neatly, they will thank you for it.

You are not the great players in the Byzantine game of crime; you are the opportunists in the gutter looking for the main chance. You are not the gentry, although you are happy to rob them if the occasion arises. You are coneycatchers, but when the coneys dry up you are happy to take whatever work comes your way, as long as it is easy and not quite above board.

Backgrounds

Your character's background describes what they did before they joined the crew. Choose one of the general background options from the list on your playbook, then write a detail about it that's specific to your character. For example, you could choose Military, and then write Flemish mercenary. Or you might choose Trade, and write Former accounts-keeper at the Mermaid tavern. See more examples below:

- Poverty: Beggar, mudlark, rag-picker, alley cleaner, urchin, or other urban cast-off or unfortunate.
- Trade: Merchant, vicar, midwife, weaver, constable or beadle, actor or practitioner of a skilled craft like glass cutting, rug-maker, or scissor sharpener.
- Labor: Farmer, scullery maid, stevedore, carpenter, wool carder, bricklayer, or other hard-working profession.
- Military: Soldier, sailor, captain, sutler, sword for hire, or other student of the *artes militaris.*
- Nobility: Truly or falsely ennobled, perhaps a knight or lady, or a servant of the same—footman, chambermaid, cup-bearer, or general dogsbody. Perhaps disgraced.
- Criminal: Murderer, abortionist, fraud, footpad, swindler, prostitute, forger, or other outrageous person.

Heritages

You wear your heritage like a ratty suit of clothes, and it will be obvious whenever you let your guard down.

- Londoners are unlucky enough to be born and bred in the great, dreadful city herself.

- The English are everywhere and consider the city their own.
- To be Welsh is to be an awkward fit in English society, neither this nor that, and set apart just the same.
- To be Scottish is to live with the constant distrust of the English around you, and sometimes their fear.
- Foreigners might be from anywhere, and bring their strange ways with them from across the seas. Your ship probably left without you. Some foreigners are actually Irish.

If you want to know every nook and cranny of the burgeoning metropolis, you are probably a born and bred **Londoner**. Chances are good that you were raised in bone-gnawing poverty, but the city is a place of extremes—maybe you come from money and have fallen mightily. “Where are you from?” is a question you answer not with a county or town but with a street, or sometimes a particular courtyard. The native Londoner is a fairly rare breed, and no doubt irritatingly proud of the fact.

If you want to have roots in the country, or in a more distant town within the realm, you are plain old ordinary **English**. You are most likely from the home counties—Surrey, Southwark, Hertfordshire, Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Kent, Essex, Norfolk, and Suffolk, Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, or Oxfordshire—but you might be from anywhere, and your people are probably farmers, but they might be up to almost anything. The vast majority of characters one meets will be English.

If you want to be seen as a little outlandish but not exactly foreign, perhaps you are **Welsh** or **Scottish**. Hailing from “the Principality,” a land with its own language and culture, grindingly integrated over hundreds of years, many English romanticize Welsh heritage. To a Londoner, Wales is both familiar and distant, the Welsh learned and mystical, and you share a nigh-unintelligible language with your fellows from the west.

Being Scottish means owing allegiance to James VI and viewing the English like they view you—with suspicion and, sometimes, contempt. To a Londoner the Scots are proud, and wild, and more than a little dangerous. Although Scotland became a Protestant nation 40 years ago, Catholic sympathies run deep up north.

If you want to be an unwilling subject or a displaced freedom fighter, you can be **Irish**. Ireland is enmeshed in an endless series of English invasions and conquests, having most recently become mired in what will come to be known as the Nine Years’ War. Why you would end up in the heart of the oppressor’s Kingdom must be quite a story. Londoners have many fanciful ideas about the Irish and consider them barbarians.

If you want to be a person on the margins of the “civilized” Elizabethan world, you can be **foreign**. The most common immigrants in London are from the Low Countries, but the streets of the capital teem with odd cast-offs from all over the continent and beyond. While French and Spanish outside official embassies are not generally welcome, they still find their way to

London—as do Germans, Italians, Slavs, and Portuguese. You might secretly be a Jew, or publicly a Muslim (if religious intolerance interests you as a leitmotif, make sure everyone is totally on board). You might even be from further afield—Russia, or Africa, or the middle east perhaps. Thee were Koreans in Portugal in 1600, so anything is possible. If your ship left without you, congratulations—you're a Londoner now.

Actions & Attributes

To support Coneycatchers's down-to-Earth feel, Survey and Study have been combined into Analyze, Wreck and Skirmish have been combined into Strike, and Attune has vanished completely.

Actions

When you **Analyze**, you apply your powers of observation and perception to an immediate problem, observe the situation, and anticipate outcomes. You might gather information from documents and books. You might closely analyze a person to detect lies, motivations or intentions. You might spot telltale signs of trouble before it happens. You might uncover opportunities or weaknesses. You could try to spot a good ambush point (but Hunting might be better).

When you **Command**, you compel swift obedience. You might intimidate or threaten to get what you want. You might lead a gang in a group action. You could try to order people around to persuade them (but Consorting might be better).

When you **Consort**, you socialize with friends and contacts. You might gain access to resources, information, people, or places. You might make a good impression or win someone over with your charm and style. You might make new friends or connect with your heritage or background. You could try to manipulate your friends with social pressure (but Swaying might be better).

When you **Finesse**, you employ dextrous manipulation or subtle misdirection. You might pick someone's pocket. You might perform some acrobatic feat, or ride a horse with confidence and skill. You might formally duel an opponent with graceful fighting arts. You could try to employ those arts in a chaotic melee (but Striking might be better). You could try to pick a lock (but Tinkering might be better).

When you **Hunt**, you carefully track a target. You might follow a target or discover their location. You might arrange an ambush. You might attack with precision shooting from a distance. You could try to bring your knives to bear in a melee (but Striking might be better).

When you **Prowl**, you traverse skillfully and quietly. You might sneak past a guard or hide in the shadows. You might run and leap across the rooftops. You might attack someone from hiding with a backstab or blackjack. You could try to waylay a victim in the midst of battle (but Striking might be better).

When you **Strike**, you apply violent physical force to an immediate problem. You might brawl or wrestle an enemy, or entangle them in close combat. You might hack and slash. You might smash down a door or wall with a sledgehammer, or employ chaos or sabotage to create a distraction or overcome an obstacle. You could use Strike in a formal duel (but Finessing might be better). You could seize a tactical position in battle (but Analyzing might be better).

When you **Sway**, you influence with guile, charm, or argument. You might lie convincingly. You might persuade someone to do what you want. You might argue a compelling case that leaves no clear rebuttal. You could try to manipulate people into friendship or obedience (but Consorting or Commanding might be better).

When you **Tinker**, you fiddle with fine objects and mechanisms. You might cut stained glass or build wire armatures. You might create a new gadget or alter an existing item. You might pick a lock or crack a safe. You might disable an alarm or trap—or set one up. You could try to use your technical expertise to create beautiful jewelry or art objects (but Finessing might be better).

Standard Items

Armor: A thick leather tunic plus reinforced gloves and boots. [2 load] Former soldiers may also possess +heavy: The addition of chain mail, metal plates, a metal helm. [3 load] The load for heavy armor is in addition to normal armor—5 load total. Wearing armor on the streets of London will mark you as a fool or a bully.

A Blade or Two: Everyone carries a functional knife for eating and everyday tasks. Perhaps you also carry a vicious fighting knife. Or a rapier and stiletto. Or a heavy butcher's cleaver. [1 load] Former soldiers may also possess +large: A weapon meant for two hands. A battle-axe, greatsword, warhammer, or polearm. Probably German.

Burglary Gear: A set of lockpicks. A small pry-bar. Vials of oil to silence squeaky hinges. A coil of wire and fishing hooks. A small pouch of fine sand. [1 load]

Climbing Gear: A large coil of rope. A small coil of rope. Grappling hooks. A set of iron pitons and a small mallet. [2 load]

Documents: A collection of slim volumes on a variety of topics, including a registry of the nobility, clergy, and other notable citizens. John Speed's almanac and map of the city. Blank pages, a vial of ink, blotter, and quill. [1 load]

Fine Disguise Kit: A theatrical makeup kit equipped with an impressive array of expert appliances to fool the eye. The fine quality of this kit may increase the effect of your deceptive actions when you use it. [1 load]

Heavy Tools: A sledgehammer and iron spikes. Heavy hand drill. Crowbar. A set of heavy manacles and chain, suitable for restraining a prisoner. A souvenir from a stay in Newgate, perhaps? [2 load]

Lantern: A simple oil lantern or bundle of torches. [1 load]

A Pistol: A heavy, single-shot, snaplock firearm. Devastating at 20 paces, tediously slow to reload. [1 load] Former soldiers or poachers may also possess +long: A snaplock blunderbuss. A bow or crossbow. [2 load]

Professional Tools: The necessary items to do honest work, or to pass as a worker. Choose the profession. Perhaps a bricklayer, weaver, tanner, sexton, butcher, spinner, thatcher, tailor, baker, or cooper?

Sporting Supplies: Several identical “bales” of dice—one set proper, two sets “contrary” for delivering high or low results as needed. Sets of cards for playing the popular games primero and cent, one proper, one marked. The fine quality of this kit may increase the effect of your deceptive actions when you use it. [1 load]

Subterfuge Supplies: A selection of blank documents, ready for the forger’s hand. Costume jewelry. A reversible cloak and distinctive hat. A forged badge of office. [1 load]

Tinkering Tools: A finely crafted set of tools for detailed mechanical and business work. A jeweler’s loupe. Measuring devices, tweezers, a small hammer, pliers, screwdriver, etc. [1 load]

An Unusual Weapon: A curiosity or tool turned into a weapon. An Egyptian cutlass, a tanner’s hide-softening club, an Italian saber, an iron flax-heckling comb, a large nail. [1 load]

Downtime & Entanglements

Entanglements work as in **Blades**, ignoring supernatural elements. Arrest has several exciting flavors in Coneycatchers. One can be arrested by the Beaks, or by representatives of the church, or by darker, more serious forces aligned with Her Majesty's government. In Coneycatchers, entanglements and other downtime consequences should be a little more intense than they are in standard **Blades**. They can inflict more stress or result in starting jobs with injuries, for example.

The Beaks are traditional law enforcement, with all that entails. The Beaks may be doing you a favor by merely beating you nearly to death and throwing you in the Thames in the service of keeping the peace. If they really don't like you, they will let justice run its lethal course.

The constables and beadles of the church are usually angling for a fine, so arrest is particularly serious. They are authorized within city walls to haul evil-doers before the civil Court of Queen's Bench, but for religious crimes there are special ecclesiastical courts. And almost everyone has committed a religious crime. The Bishop of Winchester makes a healthy profit off the Clink and other prisons in Southwark.

Finally, Her Majesty's intelligence service can effectively disappear people. Those who interfere with the affairs of state are put in dark holes somewhere while the Star Chamber considers their final disposition.

PC Playbooks

Coneycatchers has six customized playbooks. By choosing a playbook, you're choosing which type of rascal your character is. The several disorders and degrees among our idle vagabonds are as follows: Crossbiters, Rufflers, Foists, Palliards, Jades and their copesmates, the wanton Panders. Oh, how they prance and prate, these rascals, these worthless uprights. Would that the world were rid of them, for they are a plague.

Crossbiter
Crossbiters are good at performing—in public or in private. Play a Crossbiter if you want to chew the scenery in the service of some larger grift—or to save your own tail.

Foist
Foists are good at separating people from coin, sometimes in broad daylight and sometimes in elaborate confidence games. Play a Foist if you want people to thank you for ripping them off.

Jade
Jades are good at making deals and dealing with "respectable" society. Play a Jade if you want to meddle with the structures of power, licit and illicit.

Palliard
Palliards are professional beggars with wide networks and deep knowledge of London. Play a Palliard if you want to revel in the city's underbelly and live in the shadows.

Pander
Panders are good at manipulating people through sex, intimacy, and the promise of the same. Play a Pander if you want to be in control of your destiny, and maybe that of others as well.

Ruffler
Rufflers are good at surreptitious entry and extreme violence. Play a Ruffler if you want to be coldly competent and menacing.

Crossbiter

Basics

Names: “Sir” Titus Quaint, Mistress Birdlime, a dramatic name of your choice
Tagline: A player, which means a professional liar

Long Description

You’ve tread the boards (although, if you are a woman, you’ve tread the boards pretending to be a man) and you know all the titans of the art—Sidney, Kyd, Kemp, Green. Like any actor you are forced by occasional necessity to find other ways to earn a coin or two, and for you that is naked, unadulterated crime. You can capably play a jealous husband or a minor noble in a confidence game. You can persuade a rich country fellow to invest in your business growing magical cardoons. You can translate charm into access, and access into money. You crossbite, and your teeth leave a mark.

XP Trigger: When you play a Crossbiter, you earn xp when you address a challenge with your connections or manipulation.

Questions

What are your artistic ambitions? Who would you dearly like to work with in the theatre? In what way is your criminal alter ego holding you back from realizing your dreams?

Starting Actions

Sway 2, Analyze 1

Starting Builds

If you want some guidance when you assign your three action dots and special ability, use one of these templates.
The Blowhard. The consummate actor and haunter of the theater. Command +2, Consort +2. Your Public.
The Friend From Hull. Confidence trickster, usually the outside person. Analyze +1, Consort +2, Finesse +1. Cloak and Dagger.
The Toff. Dabbler on the edges of society. Prowl +2, Tinker +1, Hunt +1. Distraction.
The Romancer. Specialist in winning hearts and emptying purses. Finesse +2, Analyze +1, Prowl +1. Ability: All that Glitters..

Friends and Rivals

- Zanche the Moor, a servant. Perhaps a good source for gossip among the upper class?
- Thomas Dekker, a playwright. Perhaps a friend, or an author interested in memorializing your crimes?
- Phillip Julius, Duke of Stettin-Pomerania, a foreign noble. What unique predilections have drawn the Duke into your consultation?
- Richard Burbage, a theatre owner. Perhaps a good source for gossip related to patrons and purveyors of theater?

- Dorothea Target, a bawd. Perhaps an informant to point out potential marks, or perhaps a rival manipulator?

Special Abilities

Troupe
You know a small group of actors, minstrels, and hangers-on who don't mind making some extra coin now and again. Add a cohort to your gang. They're actors (independent, principled—they may be amenable to play a role, but not take a life). They know you best, and answer to you first (at least for now).

All That Glitters
With but a few moments to adjust your appearance, or change your clothes, you will be seen and treated as someone up to two tiers higher (or lower) than you actually are, and you always keep a single (up to two load) prop on hand that backs up your identity.

Cloak and Dagger
When you use a disguise or other form of covert misdirection, you get +1d to rolls to confuse or deflect suspicion. When you throw off your disguise, the resulting surprise gives you the initiative in the situation.

Distraction
You always know how to cause a scene. When you assist someone or set someone up, their pushes only cost 1 stress.

Side Job
Your business acumen allows you to turn a modest profit from your endeavors outside of the life. At the end of each downtime phase, you earn +2 stash.

Starling
Days spent commuting back and forth from Southwark to the city via the Thames have also acquainted you with every inch of that river—every dock, every sewer, every rotting hulk chained in the flow. You can also expertly run the rapids beneath the bridge. River/naval factions treat you personally as +1 status and coin to bribe them is reduced by 1.

Subterfuge
You may expend your special armor to resist a consequence from suspicion or persuasion, or to push yourself for subterfuge.

Your Public

When you deal with a faction, you may always ask the GM who among them are admirers and followers of your performances (one, a few, many, or all). Perhaps they saw your turn as Katherine in Marston's comedy "Jack Drum's Entertainment"?

Special Items

- A cane-sword: A sword, and a cane. A cane, and a sword. It is not good at either function, but may be handy in a pinch. It is also discrete. [1 load]
- Badge of Livery: Some legitimate token of service attaching you to the noble household of Katherine Knyvet, wife of Thomas Howard, First Earl of Suffolk. Lady Suffolk is keeper of the Queen's Jewels and a notoriously corrupt wanton. [0 load]
- Fine clothes & jewelry: A very elegant outfit suitable for wear by a discerning member of the nobility. [0 load] Unworn it counts as 2 load.
- Perseus: Your Barbary ape companion obeys your commands and anticipates your actions. Perseus salutes at the mention of Her Majesty and does something obscene at the mention of the Pope in Rome. He can dip into pockets and open latched windows.
- Theatrical props: A coffin. A gaily painted tent. A dozen fake swords and armor. Costumes: bear, allegorical rumor, saint, foreigner, sailor, Venus. [3 load]

Foist

Basics

Names: William Foist, Jane Subtle alias Jenny Cardoon, a sly name of your choice
Tagline: A street thief and confidence trickster

Long Description

You have always been gifted with your hands. You can make a dove appear from one sleeve to charm a doxy while a merchant's purse disappears down another to pay your rent. You steal from vendor's cart and shop and the pockets of the drunk and careless. The street is your home and your place of work, and you can comfortably play your role in a confidence scheme, whether acting a part or planting incriminating evidence on the person of a furious clergyman.

XP Trigger: When you play a Foist, you earn xp when you address a challenge with trickery or deception.

Questions

Some of the people you steal from are as poor as you are. Do you have any moral qualms, any boundaries, any transgressions beyond your personal pale? Who or what is your moral compass, and how does it guide you?

Starting Actions

Finesse +2, Sway 1.

Starting Builds

If you want some guidance when you assign your three action dots and special ability, use one of these templates.

The Cheat. High stakes games of chance, always rigged. Sway +1, Consort +1, Tinker +2. Disarming.
The Drawing Cove. A serious pickpocket. Prowl +2, Analyze +2. Watch my Hands.
The Friend From Coventry. Confidence trickster. Consort +2, Analyze +2. Cold Read.
The Skylark. In it for the laughs and thrills. Hearts can be picked as easily as purses. Consort +2, Sway +2, Prowl +1. Daredevil.

Friends and Rivals

- Fingerlock, Viola, Dowzabell, and Bellafront, thieving dells. Perhaps reliable underworld contacts, or perhaps old partners with a grudge?
- Henrietta Hills, alias Harry Goodpar, a gang leader. Perhaps a paramour pursuing your affections, or perhaps a former lover, now scorned?
- George Mariner, a jail bird. Perhaps a friend that you helped when you were in prison, or perhaps an enemy that hurt you when you served your time?
- Petty Swan, a not-so-miserable beggar. Perhaps a mentor who taught you your skills, or perhaps a rival sneak-thief?

- Pippa Humphrey with the twisted hand, a cold killer. Perhaps an assassin for hire, or a particularly deadly underworld scoundrel?

Special Abilities

Watch My Hands
When you push yourself, choose one of the following additional benefits: produce an object hidden about your person—hide an object on your person—plant an object on someone else.

Cold Read
Whenever you meet someone you can always ask what interesting items they have on them and what they might be worried about.

Daredevil
When you make a desperate roll, you may take +1d. If you do so, do not mark xp in that action's attribute.

Disarming
You may expend your special armor to resist a consequence of smooth talking and convincing, or to push yourself for a feat of charm or lying.

Doddypol
You enjoy a fool's astonishing luck. Take +1d on all resistance rolls.

Nothing up My Sleeves
You may carry up to two +2 load worth of items, which are cunningly concealed about your person and difficult to find. Bigger pieces may have to be disassembled.

Reflexes
When there's a question about who acts first, the answer is you (two characters with Reflexes act simultaneously).

Smoke and Mirrors
You may expend your special armor to resist a consequence of misdirection foibles. Gain +1d to resist the consequences of misdirection.

Special Items

- Fine hand weapon: A finely crafted one-handed melee weapon of your choice. Is this a well-crafted standard weapon, like a perfectly-balanced German dagger, or something exotic, like a Spanish dueling saber or an obsidian war club from the New World? [1 load]
- Grifting supplies: Bag of lead coins and identical empty bag. First page of an unwritten play. Forgeries: Bill for services, letter of credit, love letter, warrant for arrest, marriage certificate, hundred-pound marker note. Vial of fake blood. [0 load]
- A miraculous book written in no known language, said to have belonged to an English wizard or King Rudolph of Bohemia, actually created by a friend of yours.
- Badge of Livery: Some well-forged token of service attaching you to the noble household of Henry Grey, Sixth Earl of Kent. [0 load]
- Cleopatra, a clever terrier bitch. Cleopatra can deliver messages, alert in the presence of intruders, and perform interesting tricks like being exceedingly charming or distracting. [Cohort: Expert TK]

Jade

Basics

Names: Lambert Brogger, Zeunia Van Der Sloot, a respectable name of your choice
Tagline: A merchant, a fence, and dealer in goods or bodies as the need arises

Long Description

In the language of thieves a jade is an old worn-out horse, and it may or not fit you. To the world at large you are a merchant, a fence, a dealer in goods, a procurer, and a pimp as the need arises. In matters of business you have no rival. You have access to money and contacts and, while humble, you carry with you a valuable veneer of respectability that many of your friends lack. It is often very useful, but it is also a resource not to be squandered.

XP Trigger: When you play a Jade, you earn xp when you address a challenge with legitimate resources or criminal connections.

Questions

Who were you at your prime, twenty years ago? Whose heart did you break—or who broke yours? Where do you keep your money, and who knows it? Do you have children, and are they coneycatchers too?

Starting Actions

Consort 2, Analyze 1.

Starting Builds

If you want some guidance when you assign your three action dots and special ability, use one of these templates.
The Apple-Squire. Purveyor of sin and vice. Sway +2, Hunt +2. The Beaks.
The Clerk. Quiet government employee. Analyze +1, Finesse +1, Prowl +2. Rub 2 Coins Together.
The Hearth-keeper. A warm parental figure. Sway +2, Command +2. Old Life.
The Mercer. A respected business person. Command +2, Analyze +1, Sway +1. The Shop.

Friends and Rivals

- Eliza Chiles, alias Great Chiles, a sentinel. Chiles is a guardian; a protector. Who does she watch over?
- Queenie Douglas the Scot, a chemist. Perhaps a good source of medicines for recovery?
- Raffe Ketley, a spy. Who does Ketley give their intelligence to?
- Mistress Horseleech, an apothecary. Perhaps a former scoundrel turned to legitimate chemical business, or perhaps the other way around?
- Lady Suffolk, a noble. Perhaps an old friend and confidant, or perhaps one of the victims of your espionage, bent on revenge?

Special Abilities

The Shop
You own a legitimate store in the city: name it and ask the GM where it is. Choose a type of business front: apothecary—tavern—mercantile goods—a craft (tannery, wool carder, tailor, chandler, etc.). Choose two of the following: profitable—respectable—well-stocked—good customers—hidden stores—hidden entrances. Pick one of the following troubles: rivals—under watch by the law—useless, criminal employees—building falling apart.

The Beaks
You have an understanding of the local bailiffs. They treat you more civil than your cohorts (you personally are up to +2 status with them). The local undersheriff owes you a favor (or perhaps you have some dirt on him).

Calculating
Due to your careful planning, during downtime, you may give yourself or another crew member +1 downtime action.

Connected
During downtime, you get +1 result level when you acquire an asset or reduce heat.

Just Another Jade
Something makes you appear harmless and beyond suspicion, but you have hidden depths. You can push yourself to do one of the following: perform a feat of physical force that verges on the superhuman or engage a small gang on equal footing in close combat.

Old Life
You have the ear or support of a Tier 3 faction. They treat you personally as up to +2 status with them, and their leader owes you a favor (only one) from back in the day.

Rub Two Coins Together
You know just who wants the goods, or how to turn a profit. Your gang earns +1 coin from every job.

White Money
Whether the split from an old score, or savings over time, you've buried or hidden enough silver to make the difference. You have 6 coin worth hidden away, though there are rumors of such a thing. Careful spending it—it does not come back on its own.

Special Items

- Concealed snaplock pistol: A small firearm with a weak charge, easily concealed in a sleeve or waistcoat. This pistol has extremely limited range; only a few feet. It's very difficult to detect on your person, even if you're searched. [0 load]
- Spanish powder: A single dose all the way from Peru, which greatly enhances the user's strength, resistance to pain, and irrational aggression for the span of several minutes. The GM will modify your position and effect accordingly when you fight after using Spanish powder. Also, you suffer two consequences: "Can't Tell Friend From Foe" and "Can't Stop Until They're All Broken." You may resist these as usual. [0 load]
- Paper: Some well-worn warrant of dubious provenance with an impressive seal and your name on it, good for impressing the illiterate. Alternately it might be a note of favor; someone's written promise to repay you for some past kindness, aid, or judicious silence. [0 load]
- Fine bottle of whiskey: A rare distillation from your personal collection, potent both in its alcohol and its ability to impress. [1 load]
- Magical apothecary: Four Thieves vinegar, a live toad in a cage, springs of sea holly, powdered unicorn horn from Persia, chunks of flint, walnut kernels, Phoenix egg yolk acquired from the mountains of Armenia at great expense and difficulty, flakes of gold suspended in oil, rosewater, wormwood and rue. [1 load]

Palliard

Basics

Name: Bess O'Bedlam, Edward Skinner alias Ned Skinner alias The Dreadful Man, a tragic name of your choice
Tagline: A beggar and outcast with vast knowledge and deep networks

Long Description

You live a complicated life. On one hand you are a beggar, covered in weeping sores and prostrate with crippled limbs, begging with some small success for alms. A worthless whipjack, a disgusting runagate. On the other hand you are as hearty as the next person, and a skilled practitioner of the art of the clapperdudgeon—of making yourself up to play the tragic part. And in that role you see everything and go nearly everywhere, and the criminal underworld of London knows and admires you. Those who take pity on you are just more fat coneys for the pot, and the pot is full and merrily bubbling.

XP Trigger: When you play a Palliard, you earn xp when you address a challenge with deception or wisdom.

Questions

What drove you to this diminished occupation? Are you happy with your work? Who is closest and kindest to you, and who treats you like refuse despite knowing better?

Starting Actions

Analyze 2, Command 1.

Starting Builds

If you want some guidance when you assign your three action dots and special ability, use one of these templates.
The Clapperdudgeon. Making begging pay. Sway +2, Command +1, Finesse +1. Crank.
The Cove Cuffin. Controls an army of ragged orphans. Consort +2, Sway +2. Rumor Mill.
The Mad Fool. Invisible and watching the city from ground level. Prowl +2, Finesse +2. Upright Way.
The Upright. An expert criminal consultant, a Dimber Damber. Command +1, Strike +2, Consort +1. Seen it All.

Friends and Rivals

- Tomasina Smith with the scalded skin, a corpse thief. A friend that is otherwise friendless.
- Ratsbane, a finder of lost people and things. What other strange clients do they have?
- The Grey Brothers, information brokers. Perhaps a reliable contact for underworld jobs, or perhaps former partners who sold you out?
- John Crew, a master architect. Perhaps a good source for building schematics and historical details, or perhaps a rival who designs security measures?

- Leonard Lust, a pugilist. Perhaps an abuser of Italians down at the docks, or an old soldier who served with you?

Special Abilities

Crank
The obvious suffering you endure from your tragic condition can touch even the stoutest heart. When you attempt to sway someone using your disease or deformity, you gain potency—regardless of whether it is real or an elaborate act.

Barber
You've learned to splint and plaster, stitch and tidy a broken body. You can Tinker with bones, blood, and bodily humours to treat wounds or stabilize the dying. You've watched amputations and a gall bladder drained. You may analyze a malady or corpse. Everyone in your crew gets +1d to their healing treatment rolls.

Cunning Folk
You're known as a practitioner of folk magic. You can lay and lift curses. You and anyone in your crew gets +1d to their resists against any curses or beliefs therein. You may also expend your special armor to protect anyone in your crew from the consequences of anyone you've hexed. The fact that this is all nonsense is irrelevant—everyone believes it is true, so it is. You are, most emphatically, not a witch however. You are definitely not a witch.

Jack of All Trades
When you take this ability, add one action rating to two actions that you have a 0 rating in.

Rumor Mill
You have an extensive network of urchins, trugs and cranks you've become friends with. During downtime you may gather information on a person or a place as if you had rolled a 6.

Seen it All
Two times per score you can assist a teammate without paying stress. Tell us how you foresaw and prepared for this particular eventuality. No doubt you've been here before.

Tenacious
Having been kicked enough, you have made friends with the boot. Penalties from harm are one level less severe (though level 4 harm is still fatal).

The Upright Way
When you enter a quarter of town, ask one of the following: where is a safe place to hide—who is kind to the poor—who might know secrets of the people here.

Special Items

- Scary weapon or tool: Maybe it is a shovel modified with a rat-tail file, or a French horse butcher's tool. This item grants increased effect when you intimidate, not increased harm in combat. [1 load]
- Vial of dwale: A dose of dwale (bile, opium, lettuce, bryony, and hemlock) sufficient to put someone to sleep for an hour. The victim's sleep is deep—but they can be roused with some effort. Sometimes they die instead. [0 load]
- Blueprints: A folio of useful architectural drawings and city plans. Feel free to specify which plans you're carrying when you choose this item. [1 load]
- Fine disguise kit: A counterfeit crank's makeup kit designed to transform the user into a hideous unfortunate—weeping sores, twisted limbs, disgusting wounds and so forth. The fine quality of this kit may increase the effect of your deceptive actions when you use it. [1 load]
- Fortune telling supplies: Deck of 90 soothsaying cards with Greek gods, images of birds, saints, etc. A pendulum. French incense. Stone bowl. Crystal mirror. Arrowhead from the battle of Crécy embedded in a dried up French heart. A donkey's ear. Dowsing rod. [1 load]

Pander

An Important Note on the Pander

The Pander is a sex worker playbook. Obviously sex work played a huge role in London's criminal underclass in 1600, and transactional sex would be part of the lived experience of nearly everyone. Including the Pander in the available mix means you and your friends are comfortable with sex and sex work being a part of your game, so have an open conversation and make sure that is true. If anyone isn't completely on board, keep the Pander out of play.

Name: Nanny Claterballock, John Garter the Ganymede, a saucy name of your choice
Tagline: A clever whore and master of manipulation and blackmail

Long Description

You've heard the doggerel—"Eschew vile Venus's toys, she cuts off age; And learn this lesson oft, and tell thy friend: By pox, death sudden, begging, harlots end." And that's true, as far as it goes. But the real Pander knows the way to every Barbary cock-pigeon's heart—and his purse—isn't necessarily rutting like a pig. Although, sometimes, it definitely is.

XP Trigger: When you play a Pander, you earn xp when you address a challenge with deception or calculation. Find a fat coney and separate him from his money. Lure him into a trap, a slave to his own lust. Extract promises and gifts—demand glimmer. Become a kept thing, then turn the tables.

Questions

Do true love and affection look different to you? Do you find your calling sacred or does it fill you with shame? How has profiting from your body—being a "demander of glimmer"—made you different and, perhaps, better?

Starting Actions

Sway 2, Consort 1.

Starting Builds

If you want some guidance when you assign your three action dots and special ability, use one of these templates.
The Grifter. Flirt them right into the snare. Finesse +2, Analyze +1, Consort +1.
The Prestige. Work high society. Command +2, Prowl +2.
The Siren. Muse to an artist or an artist yourself. Consort +1, Analyze +2, Command +1.
The Trug. A bawd of underworld esteem. Consort +1, Prowl +1, Finesse +2.

Friends and Rivals

- Dew Nevet, a diseased beggar. Perhaps a reliable underworld contact, or perhaps an old partner with a grudge?

- Long Greene, a gang leader. Perhaps a paramour pursuing your affections, or perhaps a former lover, now scorned?
- Lady Suffolk, a noble. Perhaps an old friend, or customer, or perhaps one of the victims of your espionage, bent on revenge?
- Richard Horwood, an ancient drunkard who lives by taking wagers on his ability to bite nails in half. Perhaps a family member.
- Master Honeysuckle, a pimp. A hated figure from your past, a current target for degradation and ruin, or both?

Special Abilities

Muse
When you **sway** a mark using your wiles, you may choose one of the following: *they give you an recognizable token of their affection—they ply you with coin (take +1 stash)—they must see you again.*

Barber's Chair
"Everyone goes there for a trim." The last person you slept with will treat you like a good friend.

Bawd of Esteem
When you **push yourself** while **Consorting** or **Swaying**, all violence in your presence ceases while you speak.

Favors Owed
During downtime, you get **+1d** when you **acquire assets** or **lay low**. Any time you **gather info**, take **+1d.**

Flirt
When you **Analyze** someone while flirting with them, you may ask the GM what their secret desire or pain is.

Good Reputation
You are known to other Panders and well regarded amongst them. They will always find a place for you to hide and for one **coin**, will find you muscle for your needs (**cohort**: brutal, independent).

High Society
Whether through birth, training, or time spent among them, you are comfortable amongst nobility and in high society. You may use your special armor to avoid social gaffes or to push yourself when interacting with members of the upper class.

Pillow Talk

When you sleep with someone, you may ask them a question, and they will tell you the truth as they know it.

Special Items

- Fine clothes & jewelry: An outfit that appears to be of such fine make as to pass you off as a wealthy noble. [0 load] If you're carrying this item as a second outfit to change into, it counts as 2 load.
- Fine trick cards: Gambling accoutrements subtly altered to favor particular outcomes; for playing the popular games primero and cent. The fine quality of this kit may increase the effect of your deceptive actions when you use it. Can also be used for fortune telling. [0 load]
- Cockspur; or Holy Fire: A dose of powdered rye blight, which induces an altered mental state. The victim of this powder is not fully unconscious, but rather retreats into a calm, suggestible mental state, similar to hypnotism. [0 load]
- A bodkin: A nasty little knife concealed in a fan or book spine. The disguise will fool a cursory inspection. [0 load]
- Preventatives: A velvet pouch full of reusable French goat-bladder *condoms* and womb veils. [0 load]
- Fine disguise kit: A theatrical makeup kit equipped with an impressive array of expert appliances to fool the eye. The fine quality of this kit may increase the effect of your deceptive actions when you use it. [1 load]

Ruffler

Basics

Names: Becky Prancer alias Becky the Drummer, Kit Callot, a tough name of your choice
Tagline: A housebreaker and, occasionally, bone-breaker

Long Description

You prefer the physical to the mental. A securely locked door is begging to be kicked in. A wide-enough chimney is begging to be dropped down and climbed back up again with a bag of silver plate trailing behind. An insolent clerk is begging to have his physiognomy explored by your fists and boots. You make your coin through burglary, and when burgling opportunities are thin on the ground, through a spot of highway robbery or extortion. Sensible people fear you and your less-aggressive friends positively adore you.

XP Trigger: When you play a Ruffler, you earn xp when you address a challenge with skill or violence.

Questions

Do you have a personal code or a line you won't cross? Where did you learn your craft? When you commit violence is it a dreadful trauma or a welcome release? Who needs the money you bring?

Starting Actions

Strike 2, Command 1.

Starting Builds

If you want some guidance when you assign your three action dots and special ability, use one of these templates.
The Intelligencer. Specialist on stealing specific items or spying on rivals. Analyze +2, Hunt +2. Cat-like.
The Night Cove. Straight-ahead housebreaker. Prowl +2, Finesse +2. Keen Eye.
The Padder. Highway robber, thief by threat of violence. Command +1, Prowl +2, Analyze +1. Scary.
The Roarer. More fighting, less love. Command +1, Prowl +2, Hunt +1. Not to be Trifled With.

Friends and Rivals

- Lipsalve and Gudgeon, physickers. Perhaps old friends who've patched you up many times, or perhaps butchers who botched treating a wound of yours?
- Ferdinando Angel, a Portuguese burglar. Perhaps one of your competitors, or a former partner from before you joined the crew?
- Black Dick Durham, a Justice of the Peace. Perhaps a savvy catch-pole that's busted you many times, or perhaps an old friend that turned to the law instead of crime?

- John Straddling, a parish priest. Why is Straddling so eager to see you in church every Sunday?
- Core the Cuckold, a locksmith. Perhaps an expert that you go to for consultations, or perhaps a master who creates locks to defeat you?

Special Abilities

Scary
You have an air of menace and danger obvious to even the most unobservant. You gain potency when trying to intimidate someone. If done immediately after a show of force, also take +1d

Bodyguard
When you protect an ally, resist with +1d. When you take harm, clear 1 stress.

Cat-like
You may expend your special armor to resist a consequence from detection or security measures, or to push yourself for a feat of athletics or stealth.

Friend of Jack Drum
You may expend your special armor to resist a consequences of a fight, or to push yourself when fighting in melee.

Infiltrator
You are not affected by quality or Tier when you bypass security measures.

Keen Eye
You know rooftop paths, sewer entrances, and ways about others may not. When you case a building, you learn all ways into or out of the building, and may take +1d to engagement rolls there.

Not to Be Trifled With
You can push yourself to do one of the following: perform a feat of physical force that verges on the superhuman or engage a small gang on equal footing in close combat.

Tinker
You can tinker with devices and build elaborate armatures, lock-defeating tools, clockwork mechanisms, and so forth to further your work. You begin with one special design already known and crafted, and may bring up to three gadgets on a job.

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Special Items

- Fine pair of snaplock pistols: A matched pair of handguns, made for greater accuracy, with double barrels that allow for two shots before reloading. Were your pistols made by John Clerke, Champney & Clawson, William Nutbrown, or some other gunsmith? How do they stand out from the average handgun? [1 load]
- Fine wrecking tools: A specialized set of tools for forcing entry and wanton destruction. A small hand drill. A mallet and steel spikes. A prybar. Vials of acid. [2 load]
- Fine Venetian velvet cloak: A hooded cloak that blends into the darkness around it. This item improves your effect level when you sneak around. [1 load]
- Fine lockpicks: A finely crafted set of tools to disable and circumvent locks. [0 load]
- Basket of mixed Italian snakes. Nothing clears a room faster. It is a large basket. [2 load].

Player Best Practices

Everything in **Blades** certainly applies, but here are a couple more best practices more specific to Coneycatchers:

Don't Freak Out About History

The game, and the story you and your friends will use it to tell, are yours. While "don't be a historical pedant" falls under **Blades in the Dark**'s "Don't Be A Weasel" rule, this advice is broader than that. It's very easy to worry about "getting it wrong" in a historical setting, particularly one as deep, weird, and relatively well documented as Elizabethan England. Be bold and mess with stuff. If you don't know, make it up. If you *do* know and it clashes with the cool thing your friend just made up, Don't Be A Weasel about it. If you know something unspeakably interesting and cool, by all means introduce it and let your friends roll all over it like a dog on a dead fish. A Wikipedia-level dive into the time and place can be richly rewarding, but don't get hung up on it and don't expect everyone to join you down there—and make sure to calibrate with your friends over the uglier aspects.

Keep It Pathetic

Think about this in both senses of the word—Coneycatchers is a worm's eye view of the setting, and the characters are not heroes—at least, not yet. They are criminals in a proto-capitalist nightmare that has no room for them, and they begin at the bottom of the underworld food chain. They are going to fail, and fail often, and that is as it should be. Of course the other definition of pathetic is "arousing pity through vulnerability or sadness," and that must certainly apply. Make their lives rich and interesting, but never let the deck stop being stacked against them.

GM Goals

When you run the game, try to accomplish these goals:

Play to find out what happens.
Don't steer the game toward certain outcomes or events. Be curious!

Convey the fictional world honestly.
When it's time to say what happens, or what's in the world around the PCs, "look around" the vision of London in your head and say what you see. Don't play favorites. Make the Elizabethan world seem real.

Bring London's underbelly to life.
Give each location a specific aspect (crowded, hot, wet,
bad smelling, etc.). Give each important NPC a name, detail, and preferred method of problem solving (threats, bargaining, violence, charm, etc.). Give each action context—the knife fight is on slippery stone pilings above the Thames; the blackmailer huddles beneath Henry VI's statue inside Westminster; the Cuffin's lair, above the Bel Savage tavern, is impossibly loud.

To achieve your goals, use GM Actions (detailed in **Blades in the Dark**) guided by your GM Principles (detailed below).

GM Principles

The player characters have actions they use to get things done in the game. You have actions, too. When it's your turn to contribute, and you're not sure what to do, look at your list of actions and pick one.

First and foremost, ask questions.
You can get along very well as a GM by simply asking questions, building on the answers, asking more questions, answering them with dice rolls, and so on. Asking questions is the heart and soul of running a roleplaying game.

Ask establishing questions to set the stage for the action.
Who's leading the group? Is everyone rushing in to fight with John Nill's goons, or is someone hanging back or doing something else? Do you want to focus on Essex and win him over, or are you addressing the room at large to make your point?

Ask provocative questions to make the players think and express their characters.

What kind of person does he think you are now? Are you going to just let her get away with that? Can you bring yourself to hurt him?

Ask leading questions to show the players what you're thinking.
Do you think she's the type of person who will respond well to threats? Does anyone want to Analyze the room—or Priscilla Dinley? When you wave a torch around in here, the whole thing is gonna catch fire, though, right?

Ask trivial questions when the mood strikes you and you're curious.
Where do you usually go for dinner? Do you have any little curios or personal items here in the lair? Who doesn't have lice right now?

Ask the players for help when you're uncertain or stuck.
You don't have to do it alone. I don't know...should this be desperate or risky? What's a good Devil's Bargain here? Seems like fatal harm, I think, but maybe not? What do you think?

Provide Opportunities, Follow Their Lead
GM, it's your job is to provide opportunities but also to follow the player's lead. Providing opportunities is easy:

London in 1600 is a rascal's paradise. As the GM, you'll step in and describe an opportunity when the PCs look for opportunities, rolling or picking from the opportunity tables as you please, adding your unique ideas about the city and its factions, guided by your goals and principles.

An opportunity consists of:

- A target. Walter King, the son of a wealthy land-owner and wire-maker in Berkshire.
- A location. A bearbaiting pit in Southwark.
- A situation. King is eager to bet on the fights but knows nothing about bearbaiting.

One obvious vector for a plan: We can cut his purse and rob him blind.

More subtly, and more profitably: James can insinuate himself into King's orbit and become his friend. Beatrice (or Charles Long-Shanks) can seduce him.

Better information from contacts or investigation (or other means) may include:

- Why Walter King is in London with such a fat purse, and why he is being subtly protected by a pair of hard-looking men.
- Who is expecting him, and how they will react if he doesn't show up—or shows up broke.
- How wire-making contracts with Her Majesty's navy are arranged, and how they can be forged.

The Grift

A coneycatcher lives and dies by the grift. A grift, in **Blades** terms, includes an opportunity, score, and—hopefully—a payoff. You begin in free play and end in downtime as per **Blades**, but the details are slightly different in between. Your point of attack will hinge on the initial engagement roll. The quality of your engagement roll tells you how deep into the grift the action begins. A miss means you run into your first trouble in the Setup, a 4-5 means start in the Hook, a 6 means you begin at the end—the job went perfectly and all that's left is the Blow-Off. Make liberal use of flashbacks, particularly if you start the grift mid-stream.

A grift has five parts. Not every job needs all of them, and a skillful crew can breeze through others.

The first is the **Setup**. Sometimes there is research and planning required before the Approach, where scouting and research is accomplished to position the grift for a particular coney. Start the grift at the very beginning if you get a bad outcome on the engagement roll. It's all uphill on this job.

The second is the **Approach**. The Setter is a member of the crew who initiates contact with the coney, having identified a delicious opportunity during free play. A short grift skips the Setup and starts here—you don't need any advance preparations to snag a coney for a simple flop, for example.

The third is the **Hook**. In **Blades** terms this is part of the score. At its simplest this is a cut purse, but it is the moment when coin changes hands in a short grift, usually into the hands of the Setter's accomplice, the Drawer. Shills are accomplices intended to demonstrate how easy and safe a grift is to the coney. Start here if you get a partial success on the engagement roll. Don't sweat the Approach; if you roll well your crew has that covered.

The fourth is the **Convincer**. This is a confidence-building step designed to keep the mark focused and engaged with the grift. Start here if you get a full success on your engagement roll. The job was a cakewalk and the only delicate part is building trust and then saying goodbye. A short grift skips this step, so start with the Blow-Off on a full success for those grifts.

Finally, there is the **Blow-Off**, which allows the rascals to dispose of their coney. In **Blades** this is also part of the score, ending in the payoff. A perfect Blow-Off leaves the coney happy and concerned for the welfare of their new friends. If the Blow-Off is rough, either the Setter cools the coney off or the rascals all disappear in a hurry. Either way, it is a segue into downtime.

For the quickest, nastiest street grift, omit the Setup and Convincer. A simple roll can resolve the Approach. Use a four-segment clock for either the Hook or the Blow-Off and a simple roll for the other. These jobs will net 1 coin, 2 with good fortune.

For normal small-time grifts, use four-segment clocks and omit the Setup and Convincer. These jobs will net between 2 and 4 coin.

Larger jobs offer greater potential for coin. Let the payout determine the size of the clocks—an 8-coin coney has an 8-segment clock at the most dangerous step and smaller clocks everywhere else. The fattest coneys have a 10-segment clock and 8-segment clocks as well—truly nightmarish work for a coneycatcher. Clock size can vary from phase to phase, so a job with a 4-clock Setup and Blow-Off with an 8-clock Hook is fine.

Games of Love

The Badger Game (Short grift)
A Pander's specialty—the entrapment of a lusty paramour.
The Approach: The Pander entices someone to retire to a private place with the promise of sex. Sex is never delivered in the Badger Game, unless the Pander feels like it.
The Hook: The Pander (taking the role known in the trade as a "Demander of Glimmer") obtains coin from the coney and covertly signals to their confederate, the Drawer.
The Blow-Off: The Drawer bursts onto the scene as the Pander's enraged spouse. The coney is chased off in shame. The coney's coin is split between Pander, Drawer, and the inn.

The Crossbite
A longer variation on the Badger Game—blackmailing an actual or would-be sexual partner.
The Setup: A good crossbite requires a suitable coney. Clergymen are always good, as are high-ranking city officials and nobles. Obviously, this is a very good grift for a Crossbiter.
The Approach: As with the Badger Game, but in a convivial social setting. A Drawer befriends the coney.
The Hook: The goal here is to play on the coney's particular lusts that would cause public humiliation and, possibly, criminal action. Ideally money will change hands but it varies from coney to coney how the Hook is set. It is often best to build a relationship so that the Pander is an "ally" to the coney.
The Convincer: The coney's relationship is deliberately exposed to the Drawer, who is stunned and shocked. Their only recourse is to tell the family, inform the Beaks, etc.
The Blow-Off: The Pander and the coney together should be able to buy the Drawer's silence. A good crossbite can lead to "return business" and further touches of the same coney.

The Spanish Prisoner
A long grift for well-connected and ambitious rascals targeting the nobility.
The Setup: A suitable noble must be found, and their tastes and motivations well understood. A fairly detailed backstory must be generated.
The Approach: The Setter approaches the noble coney with a sad tale of woe. Their relative has been imprisoned in Spain and they are distraught.
The Hook: The imprisoned relative's identity has been kept secret lest the Spanish discover who they have. If the coney helps pay the ransom, the freed noble relative will surely reward them.

The Convincer: Variable. A Shill can arrive to put in half the ransom money. An amount that will be paid later can be agreed on. If the Setter is young and winsome, perhaps it is their hand in marriage that is the reward for helping the family in their darkest hour.
The Blow-Off: Of course the Spanish discover the noble's identity after the ransom has been paid. If the grift works particularly well, a new, higher ransom may be collected from the coney and their patriotic friends.

Public Games

The Flop (Short grift)
A straightforward street grift with many possible approaches. Staging an accident of the destruction of property.
The Approach: The Setter identifies a likely coney and alerts their Drawer.
The Hook: The Drawer arranges a disaster. Perhaps their spectacles are dropped precisely where the coney will step on them. Perhaps there is an elaborate accident that leaves them with a broken arm. There must be contact and confusion. Regardless, the coney must pay for their carelessness. An enterprising Drawer will have already cut their purse.
The Blow-Off: The penniless offending coney is sent to jail, or runs off in disgrace.

The Rainmaker
A complex grift relying on a combination of gullibility and desperation.
The Setup: A coney must be found who needs something they do not have and cannot acquire. For farmers during a drought this will be rain, but a heartbroken coney may need love and an ambitious coney may need wealth.
The Approach: The Setter meets the coney socially and offers an amazing deal. It may be a rain-making machine, or a magic ring that causes someone to fall in love, or an alchemical process that turns goose grease into gold.
The Hook: A price is agreed to.
The Convincer: Whatever it is, it is demonstrated with Shills and (eventually) works.
The Blow-Off: Done right, this grift can be repeated endlessly, because the machine never quite works, the enchantment needs bolstering, or the alchemist's notes need consulting.

Games of Chance

Chop-a-Card, Follow the Lady or the Shell Game (Short grift)
Classic street grifts that are easy to run, fast to take down, and impossible to beat. Chop-a-Card is simply forcing a specific card in a deck, an old magician's trick. Follow the Lady or the Shell Game can be played with three cards or a pea and three shells.
The Approach: Requires a Shill to be invested in the game and either making lots of coin or losing lots of coin, despite the game appearing quite easy to win.
The Hook: The coney can see that the game represents easy coin and agrees to play. The stakes are raised as high as the coney will bear.

The Blow-Off: The coney loses, and the game folds up and moves on. If done well, the coney can be persuaded to play again for higher stakes, but the game is so fast and easy this is rarely worth the trouble.

The Smack Game (Short grift)
A simple street game that never fails.
The Approach: The Setter invites the coney to a game of chance that seems too good to be true. The Setter is running “the Smack Game” for two players (the coney and a third, who is invariably the Drawer, who arrives momentarily). They each smack a coin down on the table. If they match heads or tails, the Setter gives each of them a coin. If they do not, the Setter takes both coins. It is an easy game to cheat.
The Hook: The Drawer is briefly distracted and the Setter arranges to cheat the newly-arrived rube through advanced collusion or “secret signals” to the coney, with a promise to share the take. They cheat for a while and the Setter consistently wins.
The Blow-Off: The Drawer becomes aware of the cheating, possibly informed by a nearby Shill. They become enraged and threaten to alert the Beaks. The Setter pleads with the coney to help buy them off, usually for a sum larger than what the coney has already put in the Setter’s pocket.

Games of Commerce

The Lift (Short grift)
Robbing a store or market stall. Many variations are possible.
The Approach: The Setter and the Drawer enter a business, dressed as appropriate—as merchants, liveried servants, or nobility.
The Hook: Highly variable. Simplest is distraction, with the Setter causing some commotion while the Drawer steals a valuable item. More rewarding is a variant of the Flop, where the store must pay for damages, preferably on the spot.
The Blow-Off: No more complicated than leaving the premises, with the Setter covering for the Drawer.
The Pig in a Poke (Short grift)
The Approach: The Setter approaches the coney with a bag containing a suckling pig, and offers it for sale.
The Hook: The price is very good, and the Setter is in a hurry. Perhaps they have multiple bags (one of which, of course, actually contains a suckling pig). Perhaps there is a Drawer eager to make the purchase.
The Blow-Off: The Setter and coney part ways, and the bag contains a mangy cat.

The Clip
Setting up a bogus store. A more complex grift.

The Setup: A location must be found and paid for. Merchandise must be acquired (the sudden windfall of a load of goods can prompt a Clip, in fact) or ginned up. Shills must be recruited as “customers.”
The Approach: Word spreads that there is a new store either selling quality goods at a deep discount or difficult to obtain goods generally. Tobacco is the classic choice.
The Hook: The goods are offered at amazingly low prices, or are very rare and desirable, or both.
The Convincer: The store is, of course, flooded with eager customers and supplies are running out. A good crew can stir up interest from other merchants, and offer to unload it all wholesale. This is risky unless the goods themselves are merely stolen, because merchants will recognize fakery and poor quality.
The Blow-Off: By the time the coneys realize what they have bought is cheap garbage, or a poor imitation, or stolen goods, the store has closed and the rascals are long gone.

The Coney Drop
A classic grift perfect for a Palliard.
The Setup: The rascals need a dangerous-looking Drawer and a frail-looking Setter. They need two identical purses, one with real coin and one with worthless lead.The Approach: The Setter is an elderly or infirm, but respectable looking person. They ask a strong, brave, reliable coney for help. There is a tough young footpad nearby, you see, and they are worried that they will be robbed.
The Hook: The Setter will ask the coney to keep their coin safe by putting it in a purse with their own—surely this menacing bravo wouldn’t dare to molest such a stalwart young fellow as the coney? The Setter produces a purse full of coin and persuades the coney to add their own coin to it. This combined purse is then handed to the coney “for safekeeping.” The Setter has, by this point, swapped the coin purse for the purse full of worthless lead.
The Blow-Off: The Drawer moves in and attacks the Setter, chasing them away and leaving the coney holding a purse full of lead.

Coneycatchers: Scores

Scores may well write themselves based on the player's interests and their character's expertise. In a pinch you can generate a random score by choosing a category, rolling a die, and using the tables below.

Target

Fat Coneys

- The vicar of Mapledurwell
- A prominent man of Norwich, ever suspicious
- A country squire's son, wide-eyed and loaded with coin
- The mistress of Freckenham Manor in Suffolk
- Servants of the Mayor of Truro, Cornwall
- A trio of sailors with slops a-jingling

City People

- A well-known horse trader and card cheat
- Beadle of Bishopsgate Ward, an unfriendly beak
- One-eyed fishmonger
- Velvet merchant
- Playwright of little regard
- Susan Hayward, wife of Member of Parliament Hayward Townshend

Uprights

- The wife of a Margate pirate
- Threadneedle palliard
- A pair of doxies who moonlight as murderers
- Gang leader
- Player, and occasional ganymede
- Thoroughly corrupted Leadenhall clerk

Strange Persons

- Italian glassblower
- Disgraced Russian musician
- Liverpudlian ghost destroyer
- Aristocrat with a taste for the low life
- Lowlife with a taste for the aristocracy
- The matron of the Golden Boar, an inn of impeccable reputation

Work

Grift

- Game of commerce
- Game of chance
- Game of love
- Public game
- A game within a game; an elaborate grift
- A long but potentially enormous grift

Unskilled Work

- Destroying something valuable
- Obtaining a ransom for a person or thing
- Injuring or killing a malefactor
- Delivering a plausible threat
- Moving heavy, illegal things
- Acting as ringers in someone else's grift

Skilled Work

- Close work; protection
- Smuggling or embezzling
- Acting as courier or messenger between factions
- Locating lost persons or things, or hiding same
- Diplomacy; negotiation between factions
- Robbing a home or business

Bad Work

- Nights in a trugging-house
- Loading and unloading ships
- Digging latrines
- Butchering dead dogs and selling meat pies
- Mudlarking
- Honest, legitimate work with no potential for graft

Twist or Complication

The church is involved, be it on the London or Winchester side
The victims are aware of what is about to happen
Motivations of the principals are not what they seem
The location is heavily trafficked or in the bright light of day
The job furthers an aristocrat's secret agenda
The job furthers a criminal titan's secret agenda
The job falls on a surprising and inconvenient Ward festival

Another crew is trying to do the same job
The job is a trap
The job is some sort of test—of loyalty, of skill, or cold-bloodedness
The job furthers a merchant prince's secret agenda
The job furthers a foreign power's secret agenda
The job requires travel to the hinterlands, or possibly Ireland
The job requires a trip to the continent
Matters of state are involved in the job
The job is in multiple locations or in some way mobile
The job furthers a conspirator's secret agenda against Her Majesty
The job furthers a city or church official's secret agenda

Extended Example

Dramatis Personae

Our villainous coneycatchers are three members of the Goodpar Gang, a small but ambitious crew that operates along both sides of the Thames, specializing in bankside perfidy.

- Temperance Mugg is the dramatic half of the Mugg sisters, a skilled Crossbiter. She does not live up to her name. Temperance is played by Alice. (Sway 2, Analyze 2, Consort 2, Finesse 1, All that Glitters.)
- Patience Mugg is the pragmatic half of the Mugg sisters, a business-like Pander. She does not live up to her name. Patience is played by Bilal. (Sway 2, Consort 2, Strike 1, Finesse 2.)
- David Peacock is a particular friend of the Mugg sisters and the leader of this grift. In his own mind, at least. He is a Foist. His player is Charles. (Finesse 2, Sway 1, Prowl 2, Analyze 2, Cold Read.)

The Portuguese Job

They are lounging about in the Mermaid near St. Paul's when Temperance's old friend and paramour Ferdinando Angel shows up. Angel always has the best gossip, and owes them a favor. Angel tells the crew that Gonçalvo da Silviera is in town. Da Silviera is a wealthy Portuguese merchant with mountains of Madiera sugar and Guinea pepper in a warehouse above Vintry wharf.

They decide to do a little scouting, looking for both information and opportunities.

> Kat, the GM, asks the group how they want to gather information and opportunities. She explains that unless the folks will take some risks, this will just be a gather information roll, with anything less than a miss yielding some concrete information.
>
> "I'll head down and talk to the ladies of the Lane," says Bilal, portraying Patience. "Anyone with some skill at pillow talk should know something about this fellow. I'm friends with them so I think a Consort roll might be appropriate to gather gossip and news from them?" Kat nods. Bilal throws 2 dice (Patience's Consort rating): 1, 4—for a result of 4. Good information.
>
> "Temperance will meet with Angel," says Alice. "I'll see what details I can glean from this da Silviera character. I think I'm flirting shamelessly with him. Call this Sway?"
>
> Kat, again, nods. "Are you wrapping him around your finger or is there something still going on there?" She asks.

> “I’m trying for the first, and maybe there’s just a touch of the latter?” says Alice as she picks up her dice. She gets a 6: good success—she can ask some follow-up questions.
>
> Charles grabs two dice. “I’m also going with Temperance, seeing if I can pull apart and think through the plan. I’m just asking some extra questions and paying attention to what we can get.” He rolls a 1 and 3. A failure. Bad info.
>
> “Charles,” says Kat. “Can we say that you’re distracted by how Alice seems to be more than just playing a role here?”
>
> “Oh yeah,” says Charles. “Peacock is maybe is just a touch jealous and too flustered to focus well.”

Temperance learns that da Silviera has a constant companion in the menacing form of Cleve Cressy. Cleve Cressy is da Silviera’s aide-de-camp and bodyguard, a rough customer who “did some bad work in Ireland” for Robert Devereux, Second Earl of Essex, a few years back.

Patience learns that da Silviera is an unmarried gentleman and a mean-spirited whoremonger whom her friends, the ladies of Three Cranes Lane, actively avoid.

Peacock learns that he is still jealous of Ferdinando Angel’s effect on Temperance.

The crew reviews their options to catch this coney. They immediately dismiss robbing his warehouse—that’s a bigger job that would require a Ruffler. All of them take the Portuguese plutocrat’s abuse of prostitutes personally, and they want to fleece him in a personal fashion. They decide on a “game of love.” A Badger Game? Too risky and not a big enough reward. An ordinary Crossbite? Possible, but da Silviera is shameless. The Spanish Prisoner is perfect. (More information on this particular grift can be found on page TK.)

The Portuguese hate the Spanish; Gonçalvo da Silviera won’t know one English noble from another, and he’s an unmarried, horny old goat with coin to burn. It’s a long grift, but it will be very worthwhile. The only fly in the ointment is Cleve Cressy.

“I’ll deal with him,” Patience growls.

The other two settle into their roles. Temperance, naturally, becomes both the damsel in distress and the prize to be won. She’s the Setter.

Peacock will play her brother and serve as the Drawer. His job will be to orchestrate the Blow-Off to mollify da Silviera once his money has been “seized by the Spanish.”

They come up with a solid enough backstory. They are Sir Edward and Lady Mary Blaine of Sussex, minor gentry who are land rich but coin poor. Their older brother, Sir Thomas Blaine, “The Hero of Nijmegen,” served under the Duke of Parma at Knodsenberg, blunting the Spanish sword in the Netherlands before being captured. It is all nonsense, but convincing nonsense to a foreigner. Temperance arranges suitably noble clothes and hair for the two of them, and the liveried dress of a lady’s maid for Patience.

Temperance decides to make her Approach at a tavern; da Silviera is staying at a private residence on Bread Street and frequents an upscale place nearby. Dressed as she is, Temperance has no trouble acquiring a lonely corner table well before the Portuguese merchant makes his appearance with Cressy at his side. She sends her “maid,” Patience, to request the foreign gentleman’s attention.

> Bilal describes Patience (in a servant getup) approaching da Silviera and inviting him over.
>
> “What is your goal here?” Kat asks. “Just getting his attention doesn’t seem impossible. What are you setting as the Hook.”
>
> Bilal thinks a moment before responding. “I’m trying to do a Setup where I mostly try to allay his suspicions. Can we flash back to where I practiced some phrases in Spanish to make sure I get the accent right?”
>
> Kat nods. “Zero stress. You had plenty of time to do so and that’s reasonable. What action is this?”
>
> “Sway,” says Bilal. “And what’s my position and effect?”
>
> “Controlled and standard. I think this is reasonable.” says Kat.
>
> Bilal picks up his dice—two for Patience’s Sway action—and rolls a 1 and 5, a partial success.
>
> “I think you do it, but there’s a minor consequence. Cressy is suspicious and stands up, looking annoyed as da Silviera eagerly accedes.”
>
> “Can I resist that with Resolve?” asks Bilal.
>
> “Sure, just let me know how you might do so.” Says Kat.
>
> “Patience just stops him gently with one hand on an arm, to ask a few minor questions. Seemingly innocuous servant talk that won’t take but a moment. Being a Pander, maybe I shyly flirt with him? I’m trying to come across as an innocent.”

Kat nods, and Bilal picks up his attribute dice. Since Patience has Sway and Consort, her Resolve attribute is two. Bilal rolls and gets two 5s. It'll cost Patience 1 stress to distract Cressy.

Patience remains behind to chat with Cressy, one servant to another. Cressy is suspicious, but da Silviera is never out of sight, and Patience is buying—and possibly selling.

Cressy recognizes something of a kindred spirit in Patience. They hit it off like old friends while Temperance tries to set the Hook. She's arranged herself as the helpless, guileless wallflower, a virginal innocent cast about in the cruel, cold world.

Temperance lays it on thick. Her brother, Sir Thomas, The Hero of Nijmegen! Rotting in anonymity in a Madrid prison! No one must know, especially fellow Englishmen! The shame! The calamity! Our brother, the heir, is loaded! If only we had the small ransom the Spanish require! If only there was a kind gentleman who hated Spain and loved heroes as much as I!

"Remember, I have All that Glitters as an ability. So I look the part," Alice reminds Kat.

"That should only make this risky," says Kat. "I assume you're going with Sway?"

"What's the risk?" asks Kat.

"You could take too long, and Cressey could come over, suspiciously pressing his point. The coney could just not take the bait. You could set the wrong amount. It could be any number of things, but nothing too drastic."

"Ah," says Alice. "But Patience set me up. Would that allay his suspicions and make him more susceptible to my words? Maybe making this only controlled?"

Kat nods. Alice picks up two dice for Sway, and marks off 2 stress. She'll push to set the Hook. Three dice. She rolls. Nothing but 1s and 2s.

"How much do you need?" da Silviera asks. Patience names an amount carefully calculated to be painful, but not too painful.

"This is a bad result," says Kat. "I think you lose this opportunity or have to try a risky action.

"Can't resist things going south," says Alice. "But I'm DEFINITELY pressing on with a risky action. We've planned for this. Can someone else step in to take this risky action? Say," she makes a mock bow across the table to Charles, "the notorious Sir Edward."

Kat laughs. “Of course.”

Temperance has calculated wrong. Da Silviera looks crestfallen. “I’m afraid I cannot help you, madam,” he says. “I simply don’t have that much ready coin to risk, even on so assured a venture, or one so right.”

The crew had planned for this contingency, and Temperance assures him that while they need that total amount, her brother has already raised half of it from family friends.

As if on cue, Peacock enters as the foppish Sir Edward Blaine, “looking for his sister.” She introduces him and explains da Silviera’s good intentions. Peacock produces a purse brimming with coin—half the “necessary” amount. He’s playing the role of the Convincer.

“So I think this is a risky sway,” says Edward, “right?”

Kat nods. “This is the roll the job hinges on.”

“Well if that’s the case,” Alice says, “I put on the most sad eyes, and the most authentic accent from last year’s production of *The Spanish Tragedy* to help move da Silviera’s heart.” She marks a stress and nods at Charles—“an assist coming your way.”

“I’ll push,” says Charles. “This is a key roll. After that failure earlier Peacock needs to prove to himself he can pull it off and impress his teammates.” Charles picks up four dice—two for sway, one for the assist and one for the push. He rolls and gets a 6!

Da Silviera, convinced, eagerly contributes “his half” to Peacock’s purse. “It is all I have in England,” he says.

“From the bottom of my heart I thank you, sir,” Peacock replies, taking the merchant aside, “and, if I may be so bold, my sister seems quite taken with you. Your wealth and her title might be a…prudent match.”

Da Silviera’s eyes glitter like a rat’s as they part ways. Meanwhile Patience and Cressy have set a date for a more intimate assignation several weeks away, “when the Blaines are back in London,” much to the Pander’s inner revulsion. But the timing is good—it will get the bodyguard out of the picture during the Blow-Off—or, God willing, the indefinite continuation of the grift.

Weeks later it is the night of the Blow-Off. Temperance (the Crossbiter is now disguised as another Sussex maid), arrives at the Belle Sauvage Inn, a nasty dive near Ludgate, where Cressy is waiting for a night of romance. The bodyguard made da Silviera promise not to leave the house, and Cressy is first confused, then delighted by the winsome maid who has shown up in the place of the more hard-bitten Patience. There’s been a delay, Temperance says,

promising much while saying little, and she has come in her sister's place so the gentleman would not be alone.

Peacock and Patience head for Bread Street as Sir Edward Blaine and maid, purses empty and eyes limned with tears. They are eagerly received by da Silviera, who expects a rich reward for liberating the eldest brother. Instead there is nothing, nothing! The ransom was paid but the Spaniards discovered his identity! It was all for naught! They are ruined! Unless they can pay a new ransom...

> "I'll try to convince him that I"m genuine" says Charles. "I look earnest and haggard, maybe using some ash to darken the bags under my eyes."
>
> "I'll have taken some time to make myself look like I've been crying," says Bilal, speaking for Patience. "I'll throw Charles an assist by seeming genuine."
>
> Charles picks up his dice. Two for sway, and one for the assist. "This is straight-up sway to milk his feelings," he says. "What's effect and position?"
>
> "Risky," says Kat. "With the risk being that he might lose his cool. Also limited. It'll take more than you speaking convincingly to talk him down and blow him off."
>
> Charles rolls. Two 1s and a 3. Whoops…things go poorly.

In a flash the merchant realizes he's been duped. With a roar he attacks Peacock, but the seasoned Foist is ready for him.

> "I don't need to be a Foist to know this guy is coming for me," says Charles.
>
> Kat nods. "He's got a roar and reaching for you with hands. This isn't subtle and he's not thinking clearly."
>
> "Okay, I've got a small stout baton hidden under my cloak, and with a flash I club him upside the head as he comes for me. Not looking for permanent harm, just enough to sit him down and end this."
>
> "Let's say risky, standard. A stout hit to the head should sit him right down," says Kat.
>
> Charles picks up his dice. "I've got no Strike so…I'll push for a die."
>
> "Do you want help?" asks Bilal.
>
> "Let's see where this lands," says Charles. He rolls a 4. Some success, but consequences.

"You land a hit," says Kat, "but his rage is keeping him up. He's probably got a cut," she motions to one temple, "but isn't going down. Let's say you get two consequences. One is lesser effect, he's not knocked out." She draws a 4-clock and fills in two segments to represent the hit. "The other is that he grabs you by the lapel and pushes you against the wall with one hand, the other pinning the baton to the wall alongside you. If you want to keep fighting, this will be desperate."

"NOW do you want help?" asks Bilal.

Charles grins and shakes his head no. "What if I don't want to fight?" Charles asks Kat. "Let's say I reach up and pull apart the loose knot on my cloak, let go of my baton, and dive out the window?"

"That's a two-story drop," points out Kat, incredulously. "Desperate at the very least."

"Aha," says Charles. "But what if I flash back to having planned for this. There's an ash cart just below, and I know I can make the jump to the open shutters across the road before dropping down. Prowl is the running and jumping skill, right?"

Kat nods. "Okay, that's controlled, zero stress. Your might still land poorly but it won't be broken bones."

Charles makes the roll and gets a 2 and a 6.

Peacock is out the second floor window, swinging from a shutter, vaulting into an ash cart, and gone in a choking grey cloud.

Patience, in her maid costume, remains, filled with an unnerving joy. If she had sleeves she would be rolling them up. "This," she says, "is for the ladies of Three Cranes Lane." Da Silviera calls for his bodyguard, but his bodyguard is at the Bel Sauvage drinking ale with the sister of the woman currently breaking his nose.

Patience goes to fight. Alice says "Strike?" to Kat, who nods. She has only one rank in Strike, but she pushes and marks 2 stress. "For the ladies," Alice intones as she marks the stress. "What's my position?"

"Risky and standard. If you succeed here you'll probably knock him out," says Kat, gesturing at the clock. "But da Silviera is pretty worked up. He could actually hurt you back."

Alice rolls two dice and gets a 2 and 6.

Kat describes da Silviera dropping the baton and getting knocked out after a solid kick to the groin.

Elsewhere things are quieter, if not more genteel. “Your master is undone,” Temperance says. “We have taken his last penny.” Cressy quickly replays the now-obvious grift in his head and smiles broadly.

“You pack of trulls,” he says, admiringly. “I should call the Beaks and ruin your evening.”

“You could,” the Crossbiter laughs, “or you could meet our friend Henry Goodpar and work with us. We know of a warehouse full of Guinea pepper in need of robbing, and if you are not a ruffler at heart I will eat my shoe...”

Crew Sheet

CONEYCATCHERS
Opportunistic ne'er-do-wells and rascals
Some crews are soft scuts after the big score, or the hard people doing hard things, and may 'Od bless them. Us? We're the punks and punkateeros, the crossbiters and clapperdudgeons, the ones after the small score, the soft people doing soft things. We catch coneys and, when we cut true, the coneys thank us for the custom.

When you play Coneycatchers, you earn xp when you execute a con game, espionage, crossbiting, or burglary.

Are you confidence tricksters, cutpurses, housebreakers, or rakes and wantons?

Coneycatchers Claims

Side Business	Box at the Theatre	Friends of the Poor	Informants +1d gather info for scores	Unruly House
Gambling Den	Turf	LAIR	Turf	Turf
Sanctuary	Turf	Lookouts	Secret Pathways	Local Graft

Local Graft: You get +2 coin in payoff for scores that involve a show of force or socializing. A few city officials share bribe money with those who show that they're players on the scene.
Sanctuary: +1d to Command and Sway rolls on-site. Your sanctuary maintains its effect as long as you help out the church with offerings and odd jobs—and show up every Sunday.
Box at the Theatre: +1d to Consort and Sway rolls on-site. See and be seen with the best seats in the house.
Unruly House: Any time during downtime, roll dice equal to your Tier. You earn coin equal to the highest result, minus your heat. Is this claim a tavern or brothel you've overtaken from another purveyor, or a new establishment replacing something else?
Friends of the Poor: You get +2 coin in your payoff for scores that involve battle or extortion. The frightened locals offer you tribute whenever you lash out. They don't want to be next.
Gambling Den: Any time during downtime, roll dice equal to your Tier. You earn coin equal to the highest result, minus your heat. Cards and dice, tennis and bowling, or bears and bulls?
Lookouts: You get +1d to Hunt or Analyze on your turf.
Informants: You get +1d to gather information for a score. Your eyes and ears on the streets are always on the lookout for new clients.
Secret Pathways: You get +1d to the engagement roll for stealth plans. You might have access to long-forgotten sewers, foul half-buried alleys, or some other route of your choosing.

Side Business: Any time during downtime, roll dice equal to your Tier. You earn coin equal to the highest result, minus your heat. What kind of legitimate business is this? How do you get paid in secret?

Special Abilities

[ ] Bullyrooks: Each PC may add +1 action rating to Prowl, Finesse, or Tinker (up to a max rating of 3).
[ ] Slippery: When you roll entanglements, roll twice and keep the result you want. When you reduce heat on the crew, take +1d.
[ ] Upright: Each PC gains an additional vice: Worship.
[ ] Doddypols: During downtime, take -1 heat. When your heat is 4 or less, you get +1d to deceive people when you pass yourselves off as ordinary citizens.
[ ] Silver Tongues: Each PC may add +1 action rating to Command, Consort, or Sway (up to a max rating of 3).
[ ] Connected: When you advance your Tier, it costs half the coin it normally would. Who is your benefactor? Why do they help you?
[ ] High Society: It's all about who you know. Take -1 heat during downtime and +1d to gather information about the city's elite.
[ ] [ ] Veteran: Choose a special ability from another crew.

Bullyrooks
Each PC may add +1 action rating to Prowl, Finesse, or Tinker (up to a max rating of 3).
Each player may choose the action they prefer (you don't all have to choose the same one). If you take this ability during initial character and crew creation, it supersedes the normal starting limit for action ratings.

Connected
When you advance your Tier, it costs half the coin it normally would.
Who is your benefactor? Why do they help you?

Upright
Each PC gains an additional vice: Worship. When you indulge this vice and give alms to the church, you don't overindulge if you clear excess stress. In addition, God will assist any one action roll you make—from now until you indulge this vice again.
What sort of alms does God most desire?

Doddypols
During downtime, take -1 heat. When your heat is 4 or less, you get +1d to deceive people when you pass yourselves off as ordinary citizens.

Silver Tongues
Each PC may add +1 action rating to Command, Consort, or Sway (up to a max rating of 3).
Each player may choose the action they prefer (you don't all have to choose the same one). If you take this ability during initial character and crew creation, it supersedes the normal starting limit for action ratings.

Slippery

When you roll entanglements, roll twice and keep the result you want. When you reduce heat on the crew, take +1d.
The GM might sometimes want to choose an entanglement instead of rolling. In that case, they'll choose two and you can pick between them.

High Society

It's all about who you know. Take -1 heat during downtime and +1d to gather information about the city's elite.

Crew XP

At the end of each session, for each item below, mark 1 xp (or instead mark 2 xp if that item occurred multiple times).

- Execute a successful con game, burglary, espionage, or crossbiting operation.
- Contend with challenges above your current station.
- Bolster your crew's reputation or develop a new one.
- Express the goals, drives, inner conflict, or essential nature of the crew.

Contacts

- Richard Vennar, confidence swindler. Perhaps in need of confederates in a scheme to stage his scandalous play, "England's Joy"?
- Cornelia Van der Berg, "The Dutch Nyx." Perhaps the shadowy woman with just the skills for a unique job?
- Peter Street, a builder and stealer of timber. Perhaps a source of supplies or refuge?
- John Fynche, a footman of Henry Brooke, Lord Cobham. Perhaps a source of society news, or unlocked society back doors?
- Old Bear, a merchant. Perhaps a retired coneycatcher?
- Lucy Apple, known as Peter Apple, an actor specializing in women's roles. A woman pretending to be a man pretending to be a woman. Perhaps her secret compels her to cooperate with unsavory characters?

Crew Upgrades

Starting Upgrades
Training: Resolve
Lair: Hidden

Hunting Grounds
Choose a favored operation type:
Confidence: Persuade a mark to rob themselves
Burglary: Theft by breaking and entering
Espionage: Obtain secret information by covert or clandestine means
Crossbiting: Theft by deception and skill

Lair (Heavens loft above a theatre, crypt of an abandoned church, etc.)

[ ] [ ] Carriage
[ ] [ ] Boat
[ ] Hidden
[ ] Quarters
[ ] [ ] Secure
[ ] [ ] Vault
[ ] Workshop

Quality
[ ] Documents
[ ] Gear
[ ] Implements
[ ] Supplies
[ ] Tools
[ ] Weapons

Coneycatchers Opportunities

Shithouse

A privy needs to be emptied and rebuilt. This is the work of “Night Men” who subcontract out the labor. 16 tons of shit needs to be hauled away, then the interior needs to be rebuilt with brick and mortar. It will take twelve men two days of nasty work, and the property owner feeds them and supplies all the materials. The Night Men, in turn, pay the subcontracted workers. All told the owner will pay about 22 pounds, and is ripe to be cheated seven different ways.

Country Coneys

- “I’m a Yorkshire farmer come to present my prize Blue and White boar to the Queen. I shall need a good sty for Champion and a respectable inn for myself, as well as introductions to Her Majesty.”
- “My father told me to deliver a wagon-load of cut juniper and then leave the city at once as though the devil were chasing me, but everything here is so amazing I wish to stay for a few hours and see the sights.”
- “Everyone in Stepney says I am the luckiest fellow in all the world, and I have never lost a game of chance, and they have pooled their money to send me to increase it.”
- “I’m a household servant of Thomas Ridgeway, First Earl of Londonderry, High Sheriff of Devon, but I’ve run away to seek my fortune here in the metropolis. I know no one and nothing, save how to comport myself as a footman. I still have his livery here in my satchel.”

Turkey Carpets

The tables of every wealthy home are covered with Turkey carpets, which arrive from Genoa and are far too expensive to throw on the floor. Carpets can be diverted during transit from the foreign ship at Galley Key to the foreign warehouse on Mincheon Lane. They can be stolen from

the warehouse. They can be stolen from the carts transporting them to their new owners. They can be stolen from their new owner's homes. They can be counterfeited and duplicated.

An Ill-Advised Missive
A regretful gentleman wants to recover a certain letter that he wrote a particular lady, which is firmly ensconced in her jewelry casket between perfumed handkerchiefs and various bits of jewelry. Any valuables that are lost in the recovery are to be considered a happy accident.

Sugar Rush
Sugar is an expensive, luxurious treat. It comes from Madiera, Canary, or Barbary in large cones that weigh as much as a baby. Stealing the cones is difficult, but sugar is malleable. It can be formed and reformed, scraped into powder and caked back into cones. It can be adulterated, counterfeited, and substituted. (Note that coffee, on the other hand, is wildly exotic and completely unfamiliar in England.)

License to Eat
The Church issues licenses that allow the very young, the very old, the very sick and the very wealthy to eat meat on Fridays and Saturdays, the legal fast days. There is a brisk trade in these licenses, both genuine and fake.

Fat Coneys
- "We're down from Oxford, having been ejected from University temporarily, and we are looking to cause some trouble and have a good time. Where is the gambling level and fair?"
- "I'm an apprentice draper who just came into some money upon the death of my father. I've heard that you can double your money easily by betting on the bear-baiting or tossing dice. What do you recommend?"
- "I'm a cloth merchant in town for a week, and my purse is full, but I have no friends in all the world. You seem like an affable gentleman!"
- "We are sailors for Her Majesty recently ashore, and penniless, but we do have this sack of silver plate we borrowed from a church in the Low Countries."

The Wild Child
Lucy Russell, Countess of Bedford, is 20 years old. She was married at 13 to Edward Russell, Third Earl of Bedford, who is 28 and deeply involved in intrigues with the Earl of Essex. Countess Russell is a patron of the arts, always good for a few pounds to any poet or playwright of talent, and is notorious for performing in masques at court herself (sometimes nude). The Countess is widely known as a poor mark—she is brilliant and does not suffer fools or the mediocre, but is still likely to get into trouble eventually, by chance or by design.

Herne's Tithe
Twenty years ago William Herne, yeoman of the guard, gave lands and tenements to the clothworkers in London. They in turn pay fourteen pounds yearly to the churchwardens of

Clarkenwell, and fourteen pounds to the churchwardens of St. Sepulcher's, towards maintenance of these churches and relief of the poor and another eight pounds per year for the mending of highways. The Clothworkers deliver their payment, strongly guarded, on a certain day to each church and to the Lord Mayor at Guildhall.

Suit and Countersuit
Robert Vigerous, a lawyer representing Cuthbert Burbage, son of theater impresario James Burbage, is in a complex dispute with Giles Allen over Burbage's surreptitious and clearly illegal tearing down of one theater (The Theatre) to construct another (The Globe). It's mired in court and Vigerous wants Allen to drop his suit. He will be hard to persuade with words alone.

Sad Coneys
- "My daughter has run off to this hell-hole with some villain and I intend to find her and take her home to Bath."
- "I am looking for my beloved, who I met at Salisbury fair and who promised that we'd be wed, and who left me with child. He mentioned a fondness for an inn called the Dolphin, know you where it is?"
- "I seek some witch or warlock who can summon the spirit of my dead wife, who I miss terribly. Just a single moment with her would be a great solace."
- "My parish in Wessex has sent me to the Bishopric of Westminster for instruction."

The Bones of Mrs. Jane Shore
Jane Shore was famously a mistress of King Edward IV. She died 73 years ago and was buried in a ditch. Now a workman has found her bones and the family of her final husband, Thomas Lynon, want to quietly purchase them for a dignified reburial. For an enterprising coneycatcher, nearly infinite paths present themselves:

1. Act as honest intermediary and refuse payment, earning the goodwill of the Lynon family, which can be used in the future, possibly to the great detriment of the Lynon family.
2. Steal the bones and hold them for a great ransom.
3. Sell the Lynons' different bones before the idiots who found the actual bones make the proper arrangements.
4. Contact the Lambert family, Jane Shore's blood kin, and start a bidding war.

The Bear Pit
A gang of child actors have turned to petty crime and worse at night. No one knows who is behind their antics, which started out as amusing but rapidly escalated to respectably professional and occasionally brutal. They've struck all over the city, focusing on wealthy neighborhoods with a complete disregard for territorial claims. Who is behind the Bear Pit?

Revels

The Master of Revels, whose imprimatur is required to produce a play at court. He is, in practical effect, a censor. His office is at St. John's Priory, Clerkenwell. Nearby is the elegant house of Madame Cresswell of Clerkenwell, a notorious procuress. Someone needs the Master of Revels to sign off on a play, and an evening at Madame Cresswell's may be the price of this favor. Cresswell, however, hates the Master and won't allow him to darken her doorstep.

Theatrical Spat
Playwright John Marston is staging "Jack Drum's Entertainment" with Thomas Dekker and the Children of Paul's company. Marston hates Ben Jonson and satirizes him in the role of Brabant Senior, A Cuckold. Ben Jonson, in turn, is staging "Cynthia's Revels," with the Children of the Chapel. Johnson hates Marston and Dekker and has roles satirizing them—Hedon (A Light, Voluptuous Reveler) and Anaides (A Strange, Arrogating Puff). These men are on the verge of violence and will do anything to derail the other's production.

The Flemish Job
Petronella Maes, the wife of a wealthy Flemish merchant, claims to be an agent of Her Majesty and seeks some hard men to do some murdering on the Queen's behalf. Two Flemish men, who are also business rivals of her husband, are—according to Madame Maes—Spanish operatives loyal to that despicable Catholic crown. They need to have a shared misadventure, preferably one that is plausible and mundane, and she has good coin to pay for the deed.

The Conspiracy
Have you heard about the conspiracy? Sit down, this will take a minute. I heard about it from WIlliam Ginkes, that lazy bastard, who heard it from a servant while he was daubing and plastering in Arundel House, so you know it is true.

At the center is Robert Devereux, Second Earl of Essex if you can believe it, who is 34 years old and desperately out of favor. You may have seen him around, the little bench-whistler, Bess threw him in the Tower when he showed up—without permission—after disgracing himself and our nation. She's only recently granted him the general liberty of the city and gossips put him at the Bankside playhouses laughing it up with the plowmen.

So Essex was charged with leading a massive expedition to Ireland to subdue the Papist bastards, but instead of covering himself in glory he cocked everything up. He wasted the Queen's money, God save her, he failed to entice the Irish into a sharp fight, and—worst of all—he entered into some sort of truce with the Earl of Tyrone. A truce! Then he scarpered off back to London and Bess threw him in the Tower where he belonged.

Essex's old man died of the flux in '76, in Dublin, while taking a break from fighting the God-damned Irish like a hero, unlike his fart-catcher of a son. His mum, Lettice Knollys, was a handmaiden of the Queen, who remarried to Robert Dudley, the Queen's special favorite handyman if you know what I mean. She is well out of favor for that, but it made old Dudley the step-father of everyone's favorite turd. You still with me? Lettice Knollys remarried a third time to

Dudley's old friend Sir Christopher Blount, who is a Papist and no good in this world. I spit on his jug.

Stay with me now. Essex is married to Frances, the lovely and innocent daughter of the late Sir Francis Walsingham, may God rest his noble soul, and his wife Ursula St. Barbe. Walsingham was an advisor and favorite to the Queen and Frances is one of Elizabeth's goddaughters. With Robert Devereux she has three kids, including a one-year-old baby also named Frances. If you see her about she'll have a nurse and that baby with her, mark my words. A good mother, Frances is, and she's a nine-year-old boy who'll be Third Earl of Essex once Elizabeth does with his useless father.

So! Robert Devereux, Second Earl of Essex, has been cut out of society because he's a God damned zad, and he's surrounded himself with even bigger zads like Blount, and the Earl of Southampton, and Sir Charles Danvers, and Sir Henry Cuffe. Oh! And Essex's own sister, Penelope Rich, Lady Rich, who is a nasty piece of work herself. She's got a rat-faced little 13-year-old son who's going to be Earl of Warwick, but seeing the Queen fall down a flight of stairs, God forfend, would only bring her joy. She's probably a Catholic like her mother, who knows with these people? If old Walsingham were alive they'd all have their heads lopped off yesterday, I can tell you that for certain. Instead they are left to plot and scheme and make plans to murder Sir Robert Cecil and force old Bess to abdicate, or worse.

And that is the conspiracy! And every word of it, my hand to God, is true. I tell you somebody needs to stop these people.

For any opportunity above, consider a crossbiting, espionage, burglary or confidence operation.

The Setting: City Wards

Outside the Walls to the North and East

The city is spreading out in an unregulated mess along major roads in every direction. Whitechapel begins a mile outside London to the east, and is a fast-growing suburb all the way to St. Mary's Church. Filthy tenements line the road to Aldgate. Houndsditch connects Aldgate to Bishopsgate outside the city. It is a squalid, desperately poor area that also serves as east London's main garbage dump. Rich people make a spectacle of offering alms here. To the north are Clerkenwell and Shoreditch, seedy suburbs packed to overflowing with new arrivals to London. The main road out of Bishopsgate runs through Shoreditch, which is mostly new construction.

Noteworthy Establishments

- Portsoken and Bishopsgate, without wards
- The vast collection of brothels at St. Giles, Shoreditch, and Clerkenwell, including one run by the famous prostitute Clarice La Claterballock. Madame Cresswell of Clerkenwell is another
- St. Leonards Shoreditch, where the vicar is selling memorial brasses from gravestones for coining, which is illegal but profitable
- The Sign of the George and the Dolphin taverns
- The Curtain theatre
- The filthy cottages built on supposedly common land near Hog Lane, Whitechapel
- The Hospital of St. Mary Spittle

Wealth: 1
Security & Safety: 0
Criminal Influence: 1
Religious Influence: 0

Operations against the citizenry in Bishopsgate are considered on "hostile turf" for the purpose of generating heat.

Outside the Walls to the North and West

To the west of London, stretching out of Ludgate along the Strand and Fleet Street, are the city residences of the nobility. This is the center of law and publishing, extending all the way to Westminster and Whitehall Palace. Around Cripplegate are the homes of prosperous merchants. Many of these neighborhoods collectively fund aggressive night watches.

Noteworthy Establishments

- Cripplegate, Aldersgate, and Farringdon without wards

- The Middle Temple (One of four Inns of Court where lawyers are trained. The students occasionally put on plays.)
- SIlver Street, modest home to many successful playwrights
- Shoe Lane, where a cockpit for cock-fighting is a popular destination
- St. Olav's Church

Wealth: 2
Security & Safety: 1
Criminal Influence: 0
Religious Influence: 1

Most engagement rolls suffer -2d due to private patrols and thief-takers. Operations against the nobility around Ludgate and points west are considered on "hostile turf" for the purpose of generating heat.

The Tower and Nearby Wards

This area is dominated by the Tower itself. Its moats and walls are forbidding and ancient—perhaps too ancient. Its structures are crumbling and decayed. Within the Tower there is terrible overcrowding. In the menagerie, there is a single mangy wolf that is "excessively old." The Tower's 16 cannons point, tellingly, toward the city rather than the eastern approaches.

Noteworthy Establishments

- Tower Street, Langbourne, and Billingsgate wards
- Custom house on Thames Street
- Mincheon Lane, where traders and sailors from Genoa reside, near the Thames Street landing known as Galley Key. Silver Genoese halfpence are sometimes circulated as English, although they are thinner and thus to use them is considered theft.
- Northumberland Place
- Unlawful camps full of squatters on Tower Hill
- The execution grounds on Tower Hill, where criminals of note and nobility are dispatched with sword or axe.
- St. Dunstan-In-The-East, surrounded by salters and ironmongers

Wealth: 1
Security & Safety: 1
Criminal Influence: 1
Religious Influence: 0

There is, perhaps, some irony in the fact that the very decayed surroundings below the intimidating Tower provide some of the best hideouts and lairs for enterprising criminals in the entire city.

North Bank of the Thames

The north bank of the Thames is all business—crowded with docks bringing in goods from all over the world, and the sailors and foreigners that accompany them, and the enterprising Londoners eager to separate them from their foreign coins. The Thames itself is a stinking mess absolutely alive with boat traffic of every description, all jockeying through what is, in practical terms, London's largest open sewer.

Noteworthy Establishments

- Dowgate, Vintry, and Queenhithe wards
- Three Cranes Lane, by the Vintry wharf, where the eponymous three cranes hoist up wine casks and other heavy goods from ships at dock
- Dorset Stairs, also known as "Timber Wharf," a major landing for bulk goods
- Blackfriars, a great hall carved out of the dissolved Dominican priory. Run by James Burbage as an indoor playhouse.

Wealth: 2
Security & Safety: 0
Criminal Influence: 2
Religious Influence: 0

Operations against ships at port are considered on "hostile turf" for the purpose of generating heat.

London Bridge and Southwark

The grand old medieval bridge is crowded with structures that jut out over the Thames, rising to four stories. It is both thoroughfare and marketplace, a narrow, shadowy tunnel popular with pickpockets and thieves. It is said, accurately, that you can walk half the length before you realize you are on a bridge. The heads of executed criminals are mounted on pikes over the southern gatehouse; usually thirty or more are visible, all coated in tar to preserve them.

Southwark, under the control of the Bishopric of Westminster rather than London, has long been the city's entertainment district, by every definition of the word. The prostitutes here, many of them from Holland and Flanders, are known as Winchester Geese.

This is a coneycatcher's playground.

Noteworthy Establishments

- Bridge ward within and without wards
- Bishop of Winchester's Palace
- St. Thomas Hospital, near Thieves' Lane
- Inns: The Flower de Luce, the Spur, Christopher, Bull, Queen's Head, George, Hart, King's Head, and many others. The most famous and ancient is the Tabard. These line

Long Southwark Road, mixed in with tenements, for half a mile. On the city side, the Bell Inn at the very foot of the bridge.
- Playhouses—the Globe, the Rose, the Swan. There is also a bear baiting ring and a bullfighting ring, all in close proximity.
- Mother Midnight's brothel in Pepper Alley, one of many, many similar stews
- The ruined church of All Hallows the Great near London bridge, a crumbled yard of defaced monuments
- Sentlegar House, a warren of hardscrabble tenements
- Paris Garden, a sort of all-in-one entertainment complex on the bank of the Thames
- Bridgehouse, a large storehouse of raw materials for maintenance of the bridge
- Southwark Place, the Earl of Suffolk's palace, now being pulled down to make room for row after row of small cottages
- The priory of the Austin Friar's church is a ruin being broken up and sold for stone. The nave, the only part that remains intact, is the Dutch community church.

Wealth: 2
Security & Safety: 0
Criminal Influence: 3
Religious Influence: 2

Should you overindulge your vice while in Southwark, you'll get a taste for it. Take +1d to your roll the next time you indulge your vice here.

Western London

The western edge of the city is heavily built up and prosperous. Gentleman's lodgings have shifted further west outside the walls, but the district still holds appeal for well-to-do travelers.

Noteworthy Establishments

- Bread Street, Castle Bayard, Farringdon and Aldersgate within wards
- Newgate Prison, adjacent to the Old Bailey Justice Hall
- Arundel House
- On Bread Street Hill are countless fishmongers and cheesemongers
- From St. Paul's one can wander down Ludgate Hill and out of the city proper, through a recently rebuilt gate, past the Belle Sauvage Inn, once grand and now in stinking disrepair.
- Essex House
- On Holborn Street is Mother Clap's, a brothel catering to gay men
- Stationer's Hall
- Grub Street, once the center of bowyers and fletchers and now popular home to bowling alleys and gambling houses
- Lombard Street, home to many banks

Wealth: 3

Security & Safety: 3
Criminal Influence: 0
Religious Influence: 0

Most engagement rolls suffer -1d due to alert bailiffs and their constellation of snitches. Operations against the nobility in western London beyond the City walls are considered on "hostile turf" for the purpose of generating heat.

Eastern London

Aldgate is the main entrance to London from Whitechapel and the east. It is not as prosperous as its western counterparts, but that is rapidly changing.

Noteworthy Establishments

- Aldgate and Lime Street wards
- St. Catherine Christ Church
- The Green Gate, a tenement and nine shops
- Leadenporch, a cluster of tenements, merchant's homes, and "a cook's house."
- The large homes of Sir William Bowyar and Sir Henry Huberthorne, somewhat out of fashion and dilapidated
- The Church of St. Marie at the Axe, suppressed, its ornate buildings now warehouses. Its full name is the Church of St. Marie the Virgin, St. Ursula, and the Eleven Thousand Virgins.
- The Church of the Holy Trinity, now a carpenter's yard, tennis court, and glass-makers studio
- 14 alms-houses for the poor along Woodroffe Lane

Wealth: 2
Security & Safety: 2
Criminal Influence: 0
Religious Influence: 0

The poor residents of this district watch out for each other. Operations here are considered on "hostile turf" for the purpose of generating heat.

St. Paul's and West-Central London

St. Paul's is the spiritual, political, and social capital of the city. The cathedral is in bad repair. Masonry rains off the roof. St. Faith's Under St. Paul's, one of London's ecclesiastical oddities, conducts services in the crypt, mostly for the booksellers who crowd the courtyard above. Paul's Walk, the long central aisle of St. Paul's, is the place where all of London seems to congregate. Merchants do business, lawyers and pickpockets roam looking for opportunities, prostitutes and beggars ply their trades, servants seeking masters sometimes meet masters seeking servants, and everywhere gossips gossip.

Noteworthy Establishments

- Cordwainer Street and Walbrooke wards
- The Mermaid tavern, adjacent to the cathedral and a popular meeting place
- Watling Street, the address for wealthy drapers and the best cloth from England and abroad

Wealth: 2
Security & Safety: 2
Criminal Influence: 0
Religious Influence: 4

Operations against the citizenry anywhere near St. Paul's are considered on "hostile turf" for the purpose of generating heat.

Cheap Ward

Cheapside, London's main high street, is the focal point of Cheap Ward. Clustered around the remnants of the old medieval market are some of the richest businesses in the city—goldsmiths, silversmiths, and money-changers, each displaying vast quantities of treasure (and guarding it appropriately). These are mixed in with less prestigious businesses—lacemakers, booksellers, and hat-makers are all moving in, and the nature of Cheapside is changing. The district is getting seedier, and the best businesses are heading east to Cornhill and Threadneedle Streets.

Noteworthy Establishments

- The Harry in Cheapside, a notorious stew
- Guildhall, the great hall from which the city is administered. Nicholas Mosley is Lord Mayor
- The Boar's Head tavern on Great Eastcheap
- Honey Lane, a narrow, dark and very convenient alley. All-Hallows in Honey Lane is a decrepit church midway.
- Milk Street, home to many wealthy merchants and near to the Mercer's Hall
- Christopher and Mary Mountjoy, French Huguenot refugees that make ornamental headdresses of high value with gold and precious stones, have a very fashionable shop on Monkwell Street

Wealth: 3
Security & Safety: 2
Criminal Influence: 2
Religious Influence: 0

The records in Guildhall can be of particular interest to criminal sorts. Take a Devil's Bargain for +1d to gather info here in exchange for 1 heat (the bailiffs are always watching for fart-catchers like you).

Northern London

This district has seen better days, and is full of cramped streets pressed hard against the city wall. The farther south you go toward Guildhall and Eastcheap, the nicer it gets.

Noteworthy Establishments

- Colman Street and Basinghall wards
- Blakewell Hall, a recently-finished and very strong storehouse that replaced the former hall, home to the merchant Richard May
- St. Michael in Basinghall Church
- The Draper's Hall, the Cooper's Hall, and other guild halls
- Leather and Gold Lanes, once elegant streets but now fallen into filth and disrepute, the homes broken up into squalid tenements
- A large water conduit into the city, carrying sweet water from springs between Hoxton and Iseldon
- The old fortresslike stone house at the corner of Bassinghall Street, built in the days of Edward I by "a certain Jew named Mansere, son of Aaron the Jew." Now the ground floor is a marketplace for wool, flannel, and other cloth, owned by Alderman James Bennett.

Wealth: 1
Security & Safety: 0
Criminal Influence: 1
Religious Influence: 0

Everyone in northern London is busy doing three things at once. What's adding a fourth? If you need a professional mourner, distracting gaggle of children, or absent-minded servant that might leave a door unlocked, this is where you look first.

Northeast London

Bishopsgate is the main northern entryway into the city, and is undergoing dramatic changes. Just outside the gate, what was once farmland has been transformed into new warrens to house the metropolis's burgeoning underclass. Inside the gate, once elegant neighborhoods are falling into neglect.

Noteworthy Establishments

- Broad Street and Bishopsgate within wards
- Fisher's Folly, Jasper Fisher's enormous and ostentatious mansion on Bishopsgate Street. It has its own chapel and gardens and sits directly across the street from Bedlam.
- "The French Church," the French Huguenot church on Threadneedle Street
- The Black Bull tavern

- The Worshipful Company of Merchant Taylor's Hall and Carpenter's Hall
- Cosby Hall, Sir John Spencer's mansion, said to be the tallest and most elegant private home in London
- The home of Roland Sleford, a cloth-maker who was the administrator of Bedlam for 19 years before suddenly resigning recently

Wealth: 0
Security & Safety: 1
Criminal Influence: 2
Religious Influence: 0

Beyond the walls of Bishopsgate, the new, poor warrens are the best place to trade illicit goods in the city, but the darker corners are full of weird and surprising trouble. You can take +1d to acquire an asset here, at the cost of 2 stress.

East-Central London

The district is rapidly gentrifying as high-end merchants abandon Cheapside for Threadneedle. South of the High Street, new inns have lowered the tone of Candlewick ward and it is no longer in fashion.

The Royal Exchange on the north side of Cornhill is an open air arcade where anything and everything is on sale. At the Exchange one might find China chains, China bracelets, China scarves, China fans, China girdles, China knives, China boxes, China cabinets, caskets, umbrellas, sun dials, hourglasses, looking glasses, bruning glasses, concave glasses, triangular glasses, convex glasses, crystal globes, waxen pictures, ostrich eggs, birds of paradise, muskets, Indian mice, Indian rats, China dogs and China cats. Flowers of silk, mosaic fishes, waxen fruit and purslane dishes, very fine cages for birds, billiard balls, purses, pipes, rattles, basins, ewers, cups, cans, toothpicks, targets, falchions, beards of all ages, visors, and spectacles. Game, such as quail, heron, egret, venison, boar, or salmon. Live animals of every description, including hunting falcons and songbirds. Dogs—guard mastiffs and specialized hunting dogs. Wine, typically French, or beer, typically English. Objects of learning and art—rare books (in Latin, Greek, or even Arabic and Hebrew), religious texts, portraits, poems, and devotionals. As well as thieves and prostitutes.

Noteworthy Establishments

- Cornhill and Candlewick wards
- The Cross Keys and the Bell, both on Gracechurch Street and both with courtyards used as playhouses, are disreputable inns
- Catherine Wheel Inn and adjacent alley containing the Pope's Head tavern
- Leadenhall, a massive structure with food stalls and granaries above, as well as the city arsenal and where alms are distributed to the poor
- Goldsmiths leaving Cheapside to move into Cornhill and Threadneedle
- Former churchyard of St. Michael's, Cornhill, now filled with tenements and squats

- Burchin Lane, where used apparel and household goods are sold

Wealth: 4
Security & Safety: 2
Criminal Influence: 1
Religious Influence: 0

The Royal Exchange is the best marketplace in all of England, but criminal types draw lots of unwanted attention. You can take +1d to acquire an asset here, but also accrue +2 heat.

The Setting: Court and Law

Doing Crimes

Unless you actually cannot work due to injury or disease, being a vagrant is illegal. If you cannot demonstrate visible means of support, you are both a sinner and a criminal and are likely to be kicked out of your ward, parish, or town. Actors without a noble patron are considered vagrants. Some beggars are brutally manufactured, and others are skilled imposters.

You can be arrested for many surprising things. You can go to prison for debt, or for saying mean things to a magistrate, or for eating mutton on Friday, or for not reporting a crime, and these aren't even the surprising ones.

Getting Busted

You don't want to get caught. First of all, you are likely to be badly beaten and possibly killed during your apprehension. Your victim, or neighborhood observers, will apprehend you if they can. If they cannot, they will raise a hue and cry and summon the night watch to catch you.

Bailiffs working for the Sheriff of London, or Justices of the Peace, are the street-level law enforcement who will arrest you and take you to the nearest jail, of which London has ten. Most are wildly corrupt and paying them off is infinitely preferable to being arrested. A Justice of the Peace has the legal power to make summary judgment and send you directly to prison without trial.

Beadles are minor extortionists and snitches for the Church, often accepting kickbacks in lieu of reporting offenders to the ecclesiastical court. If a beadle finds beef in your shopping basket on a Friday, he will confiscate it in the name of God (and eat well). Beadles can make arrests within the city walls.

The Courts

Justice is administered in one of three court systems, depending on the nature of the offense, but you want to avoid them all.

The common law Court of the Queen's Bench is the one most criminals will have contact with. When the Crown brings criminal suit the case will be heard here. Trials for vagrants, beggars, pickpockets, and thieves without connections are pro forma affairs. The Court of Common Pleas handles civil actions. All these courts vary in their uprightness; some judges and many jurors can be bought.

Matters of more complexity and import may be heard before one of Her Majesty's Equity Courts; the Court of Requests handles important cases related to Her Majesty's servants and the Court of the Star Chamber addresses political crimes. The most likely place for a legal appeal of a Queen's Bench case would be the Chancery, overseen by the Lord Chancellor.

Moral lapses are heard before ecclesiastical courts overseen by the Church. Adultery, bigamy, and fornication without parallel law-breaking are tried in ecclesiastical court. So is the eating of meat on a Friday. If you have to choose one, be a sinner and throw yourself on the mercy of the ecclesiastical court's canon law, where punishments are far less severe.

Language for Legal Complaints

A GM might use these, as spoken in open court, to impress upon the characters the seriousness of their crimes.

GROUP VIOLENCE

The said [NAME], unlawfully combining and confederating himself with the said [NAME] and and diverse other persons to the number of [NUMBER] to myself unknown, did on [DATE] riotously assemble themselves together and then and there armed themselves with diverse and many unlawful and offensive weapons, as namely swords, daggers, bills, axes, and such like. And so armed, they did then repair unto the said [LOCATION] and then and there, armed as aforesaid, in very riotous, outrageous, and forcible manner, and contrary to the laws of Your Highness''s realm, attempted to [ACT].

PERSONAL VIOLENCE

Upon [DATE], one [NAME], [OCCUPATION AND COAT COLOR], a shifting fellow having a perilous wit of his own, intending a spoil if he could have brought it to pass, did at [LOCATION] quarrel with certain [PEOPLE], [OCCUPATION], and struck some of them, and lastly he with his [WEAPON] wounded and maimed one of the [PEOPLE] upon [BODY PART]. Whereupon there assembled a great crowd. This [NAME] did very cunningly convey himself away, but he was taken after.

HOUSEBREAKING

When diverse of your subject's servants and farmers then going about in peaceable manner to procure them to desist from that their unlawful enterprise, [NAME], the said riotous persons aforesaid, notwithstanding, with great violence, not only then and there forcibly and riotously resisting your subject's servants and farmers but also then and there pulling, breaking, and throwing down the [LOCATION] in very outrageous, violent, and riotous sort to the great disturbance and terrifying not only of your subject's said servants and farmers but of diverse others there near inhabiting. And having so done they did then, also in most forcible and riotous manner, take and carry away from thence [OBJECT].

PERJURY
The said [NAME] did very maliciously and corruptly, and contrary to the laws and statutes of Your Highness's realm, suborn and procure one [NAME] of the parish of [NAME] in London, [OCCUPATION], and [NAME] of the parish of [NAME] in London, [OCCUPATION], to commit very grievous and wilful perjury in the said suit in Your Highness's Court of Requests in diverse material points concerning the said suit.

Get Out Of Jail Free Cards

There are few ways to avoid stern justice, but they are all exceedingly useful if they can be arranged.

Pardons
A pardon or other clemency is not uncommon, particularly if one has powerful friends or a lot of money to spread around. Sometimes a well-intentioned noble person will take it upon themselves to reform a particularly sympathetic or well-spoken criminal, and advocate on their behalf.

Pregnancy
Capital punishment is never extended to pregnant women. Many women get pregnant in a hurry as a result, once so sentenced. In heinous cases, the sentence is merely deferred but such women are often pardoned.

Benefit of Clergy
If you can demonstrate literacy, you can plead benefit of clergy to have a first conviction pardoned, provided the offense is fairly minor—manslaughter is “non-clergyable.” If you already have a record you can forget this option.

Errors
The law is a tricky business and mistakes happen occasionally. Paperwork is lost, records destroyed, technicalities brought to light, even without the help of your friends or your money. In these cases you will be released to sin again.

Sentences

These sentences will give you a general range to expect, but individual judges and juries can be capricious. There are many more punishments than those listed.

Humiliation (The pillory, appearing in public in a penitential gown)

The most common punishment.

- Issued for any number of minor crimes.

Imprisonment

Also quite common.

- Common in adjunct to, or substitution for, a more physical punishment. Prison sentences can range from a week to a lifetime. Whatever else happens, if you are caught and tried you are very likely to have already spent time in prison when your sentence is read, and you are very likely to be going back for more.

Whipping

Also a common punishment.

- Being able bodied with no means of support (all offenses)

Carting (Being dragged behind a cart through town)

A more severe form of public humiliation with some physical injury mixed in.

- Unlawful prostitution

Banishment

To be given “Jack Drum’s entertainment”—to be beaten and run out of the ward, or the town.

- Religious offenses
- Vagrancy (quite often on first offense)

Mutilation

Commonly threatened, less commonly administered for felony first offenses. More likely for recidivists.

- Being able bodied with no means of support (first offense, disfiguring an ear)
- Willful manslaughter (right hand, sometimes followed by hanging)
- Uttering seditious words against magistrates (one or both ears lopped off)
- Perjury (branding letter “P” on the forehead)
- Theft (branding the right thumb, first offense)

Confiscation (All goods confiscated by the Crown; accompanied by prison)

- Perjury
- Counterfeiting

Execution
You are to be drawn upon a hurdle to the place of execution, and there you are to be hanged by the neck, and once dead to be disposed of where Her Majesty shall think fit.

- Being able bodied with no means of support (Second offense; rarely enforced)
- Theft (Second offense)
- Murder
- Murder during robbery (Gibbeting—being hanged alive)

Prisons

There are ten prisons scattered around London. You are almost certain to go to either Newgate or the Clink (in Southwark) as a common criminal. Both are utter hellpits that will destroy you body and soul unless you have the means to ease your stay. If you don't pay for your own food, or have some brought, you will starve. If you don't pay for better lodgings, you will be thrown in a lightless hole in the ground crawling with vermin and lunatics.

If you do have money, you can be as comfortable as you wish. Running a prison is a lucrative enterprise.

Bridewell Prison, Hospital and House of Correction is where you are likely to end up if you are a woman or a child. In the House of Correction you'll spend your days beating hemp or doing other hard manual labor. Bridewell has an open sewer running beneath it.

Those thought mentally unfit for some reason will be sent to **Bedlam**, which is adjacent to and overseen by Bridewell. In Bedlam you will be put on display in chains to generate horror, mirth, and donations from well-heeled visitors. The length of your sentence is at the pleasure of your keepers.

Political prisoners end up in the **Tower**, and may God help them.

Starting Situation and Factions

The Copesmates are a gang that controls everything surrounding the Thames, from London bridge to Dorset Stairs on the north bank and Southwark on the south. With the river come the docks and their goods coming and going, and the limitless ocean of vice that is Bankside and the entertainment venues beyond the city limits in Southwark. Wealthy and content, the Copesmates feel secure, but others look on what they have with an almost carnal hunger.

The Bawdy Baskets, a gang rising from the rough neighborhoods beneath the Tower and run at its highest echelons by enterprising women, sees an opportunity. If they can secure the cooperation of the Copesmates' erstwhile allies, the Cuffins of West London, the two gangs can strike together to drive the Copesmates into the river. The Cuffins would get the docks, and the Bawdy Baskets would claim the bridge and everything beyond—including the big prize, Southwark's network of stews, bearbaiting pits, and theaters.

Before this happens, the treacherous attackers will be ramping up intelligence gathering and beefing up their supply of roarers and rufflers. During the chaos, anything goes—the established gangs will be too busy consolidating their power and murdering each other to notice side jobs. And afterward, there will be power vacuums a clever crew can exploit to secure some turf of their own.

Factions in Detail

Livery Companies

(Always preceded by "The Worshipful Company of…") Each is independent, so all three of the Big Three are tier V factions.

- The Big Three: Mercers, Grocers (including the current Sheriff of London) and Drapers, who are merchants of wool and cloth. V S
- The Companies of Substance: Fishmongers, Goldsmiths, Skinners, Salters, and Haberdashers (including the current Lord Mayor). IV S
- The Lesser Companies: Ironmongers, Vintners, Dyers, Brewers, Barbers, and many others. III S for the ones named; II S for the rest.

The People

- The Citizenry, who can form up as a variably-Tiered faction whenever appropriate.
- River People, including lightermen, mudlarks, sweep-boys and dockworkers. Most are hard-working and legitimate; some are no better than pirates.

Institutions

- Lord Mayor (Sir William Ryder, associated with the Haberdashers)
- Bishop of London (Richard Bancroft, serving as primate because of the infirmity of Archbishop of Canterbury John Whitgift. Bancroft is sole arbiter of English ecclesiastical affairs. The Chief Constable of London and his parish constables, beadles, and churchwardens answer to Bancroft. London's Ecclesiastical Court is empaneled by the Bishop.)
- The Beaks. Sheriff of London (Humphrey Weld, associated with the Grocers, commander of Her Majesty's Justices of the Peace before the Court of the Queen's Bench, including all Ward undersheriffs and their Bailiffs, Sergeants, and Watchmen). Tough as any gang and just as underhanded.
- Bishop of Winchester (Thomas Bilson, overseer of everything both secular and ecclesiastic south of the Thames. Southwark's morally flexible Ecclesiastical Court is empaneled by the Bishop.)
- Her Majesty's Council of the Marine (Oversees naval matters, including provisioning of warships within the Thames water and guarding them against larcenous sweep-boys and foreign intrigues.)

The Underworld

- Copesmates
- Bawdy Baskets
- Powell Prophet's Gang
- Fenchurch Foisters
- Cheapside Coves
- Westside Cuffins
- The Bear Pit
- Tribunatus
- Læva Dei

The Big Three Livery Companies
Mercers, Grocers (including the current Sheriff of London), and Drapers, who are merchants of wool and cloth. V S
The most powerful business interests in the city and the nation.
Their influence extends to every corner of England.
NPCS

- Lady Dorothy Grove
- Robert Yaxley
- Bramble (A lawyer)

Also Lydia Chandler, Clement Burwick, Flash, Dapper and Gallant (Gentlemen)

Features: Ominously silent, ominously active, ominously interested

Allies: Sometimes, other livery companies, particularly smaller ones. Sometimes, Her Majesty's government. The Beaks, always.
Enemies: The underworld, generally; other livery companies, particularly equals in stature and power. Sometimes, Her Majesty's government. Sometimes, the church.
Situation: The Merchants, Grocers and Drapers are each a formidable organization, and when their interests align they can bend the trajectory of all sorts of interesting matters. Humphrey Weld, the Sheriff of London, is currently a Grocer, and the Beaks step lively when the Grocers call.

The Livery Companies of Substance
Fishmongers, Goldsmiths, Skinners, Salters, and Haberdashers (including the current Lord Mayor, Sir William Ryder). IV S
Ambitious and hungry, the companies baying at the door of the Big Three are also formidable and more morally flexible in pursuit of their goals.
Their influence extends across the city.
NPCS

- Dorcas Frith
- Hugh Inwood
- Portly (A clerk)

Also Cecily Stubb, Samuel Fitzlewis, Mistress Otter, and Squeamish (Dells)

Features: Arrogant, cruel, scheming

Allies: Sometimes, other livery companies, particularly smaller ones. Sometimes, Her Majesty's government or various underworld players. The Lord Mayor of London.
Enemies: Other livery companies, particularly equals in stature and power. Sometimes, Her Majesty's government. Sometimes, the church.
Situation: These middle-tier livery companies remain a force to be reckoned with, particularly when their collective business interests are threatened.

The Lesser Livery Companies
Ironmongers, Vintners, Dyers, Brewers, Barbers, and many others. III S for the ones named; II S for the rest.
Scrappy, up-and-coming livery companies protect the interests of their crafts and are not afraid to get their hands dirty.
While livery companies can be found city-wide practicing their craft, each tends to cluster in a particular neighborhood. The Dyers can be found along the Thames in Dowgate, Vintry, and Queenhithe wards, for example.
NPCS

- Hannah Justice
- Wolston Crugg
- Frail (A messenger)

Also Audrey Jade, Myles Young, Fidget (A punkateero)

Features: Cowardly, scheming, nasty

Allies: Sometimes, other livery companies, particularly smaller ones. Sometimes, various underworld players.
Enemies: Other livery companies, particularly equals in stature and power.
Situation: There is a vast cosmology of smaller livery companies, and at the lower levels they tend to be less organized and more crude in their interests and methods.

The Citizenry
The many colorful groups of Londoners can form up as a variably-Tiered faction whenever appropriate.

The entire city is their turf and they know it well.
NPCS

- Kitty Shaw
- Christopher Dryland
- Mistresses Treacle and Tenterhook (Panders)

Also Judy Purseglove, Ralph Wolfden, Scapethrift (A gambler)

Features: Patriotic, prone to wild enthusiasm right or wrong, usually drunk

Allies: Their good, honest neighbors, who may not be good or honest but will raise a glass with them and join their voices in outrage or joy.
Enemies: The Beaks, sometimes; underworld factions, occasionally; the Lord Mayor, often.
Situation: The people are an ever-churning mass always poised to explode into righteous action.

River People
Most are hardworking and legitimate; some are no better than pirates. II S when they pull together.
The true residents of the Thames.
River people can be found anywhere the Thames flows.
NPCS

- Mary Coppinger
- Tom Flood
- Old Prude (A soothsayer)

Also Mabel Hardesty, Glister and Purge (Quacks), Cornelius Club (A ruffler)

Features: Free-spirited, filthy, expert.
Allies: The citizens of London, sometimes. The criminal underworld, sometimes.
Enemies: The Lord Mayor, Her Majesty's government, Her Majesty's Council of the Marine.

Situation: Lightermen, mudlarks, sweep-boys, dockworkers, and all their kind are the people of the river. Their London scarcely extends fifty yards from the bank.

Bishop of London
The church's authority in London north of the Thames. V S
Ecclesiastic authority radiates outward from St. Paul's but stops at the river, across which lies the exclusive domain of the Bishop of Winchester.
NPCS

- Jane Wyatt
- Peter Widowson
- Bendall (A vicar)

Features: Reluctant to be political, wielding soft power, occasionally kind
Allies: The citizenry, for the most part. The church is generally a thorn in the side of both commerce and government.
Enemies: The Bishop of Winchester, the underworld in general.
Situation: Richard Bancroft is serving as primate because of the infirmity of Archbishop of Canterbury John Whitgift. Bancroft is sole arbiter of English ecclesiastical affairs. The Chief Constable of London and his Parish Constables, Beadles, and Churchwardens answer to Bancroft. London's Ecclesiastical Court is empaneled by the Bishop.

The Beaks
Sheriff of London (Humphrey Weld, associated with the Grocers, commander of Her Majesty's Justices of the Peace before the Court of the Queen's Bench, including all Ward Under-Sheriffs and their Bailiffs, Sergeants, and Watchmen). III S
Tough as any gang and just as underhanded.
The Beaks are everywhere north of the river, rarer in Southwark, and rarer still in the criminal rookeries that reject them and the halls of power and privilege which bribe them to steer clear.
NPCS

- Foresight (A Justice of the Peace)
- Brute (A thief-taker)
- Elbow and Grip (Undersheriffs)

Also Unice Skipwith, Osmond Culpepper, Garrett Ackwith

Features: Venal, proud, often quite competent
Allies: The Lord Mayor, Her Majesty's government, The Big Three livery companies.
Enemies: Criminals everywhere.
Situation: The Beaks are not all-powerful, but they are not to be trifled with. Their legitimate connections make them dangerous to oppose, and they are notoriously corrupt.

Bishop of Winchester
The Bishop runs what amounts to an enormously lucrative personal fiefdom in Southwark, beyond the city walls. V S
Thomas Bilson is overseer of everything both secular and ecclesiastic south of the Thames.

NPCS

- Thomas Bilson (The Bishop's Man)
- Prudence Lush (The Bishop's Woman)
- Horehound and Mustard (Beadles competing to see who can be more deeply corrupt)

Features: Outwardly prudish, inwardly morally flexible

Allies: The Copesmates gang.
Enemies: The Bishop of London.
Situation: Southwark's morally flexible Ecclesiastical Court is empaneled by the Bishop.

Her Majesty's Council of the Marine
Thames river military police.
NPCS

- Christopher Cardiff (A river policeman who thinks he is a great naval captain)
- Benjamin Cobb (An old tar)
- Greenwit (A supply officer)

Features: Perpetually aggrieved, necessarily brutal, pragmatic

Allies: Her majesty's government.
Enemies: The River People, the underworld generally.
Situation: The Council of the Marine exist to keep Her Majesty's ships afloat and her cargo and fittings unmolested. In the Thames water, this is an epic challenge.

The Copesmates
An affable gang of comrades.Claims the North Bank and London Bridge and Southwark as their turf—making them, at least in theory, lords of the Thames, its docks and points of embarkation, its crossings, and its riverine traffic. Their lair is a tavern called the Golden Conger, squatting on London Bridge itself. Control of Southwark's vice is a gold mine.

NPCs:

Nicholas Adams (A great stammerer)
Luis Lopez (A Portuguese)
Clever Ned (Not so clever)
Also Sybil Piggot-Wake, Adam Fabian, Truewit (A rake)

Features: Affable, loyal, lucky

Allies: The gentleman of the west, the Cuffins, and the Bishop of Winchester.
Enemies: Those cod-slop wantons, the Bawdy Baskets.

Situation: Feeling pressure on their claims, the Copesmates need friends and allies. The Cheapside Coves have made overtures and an alliance seems likely.

The Bawdy Baskets

The Bawdy Baskets are a gang that controls most of east-central London, south to the river and north inside city walls almost to Bishopsgate and west as far as Grace Church Street. Northumberland Place House is square in the center of their territory. The Bawds are often called an all-woman gang, but that is not true—while the upper echelons are exclusively female, plenty of men swear fealty to the gang.

NPCs:

Penelope Horehound and Catharina Bountinall, who run things
Mary Frith the Roaring Girl
Pleasance Nieuwkercke, the Dutch terror
Roland Switt, once a Copesmate but no longer
Also Avis Coffin, Elias Hussey, Ague (A palliard)

Features: All business, occasionally savage, frequently underestimated

Allies: The well-apportioned Powell Prophet's gang.
Enemies: The rum-besotted Copesmates.
Situation: Horehound and Bountinall hope to make a deal with the Cuffins to move on and carve up the Copesmate’s territory, leaving Dowgate, Vintry, and Queenhithe wards to the Cuffins and taking the bridge and Southwark for themselves.

Powell Prophet's Gang

Powell Prophet's Gang is a powerful crime syndicate that controls most of northeast London, centered around Bishopsgate. Their territory extends west almost to Cripplegate and south to Threadneedle Street and the Merchant Taylor’s Hall. Everything outside the city from Whitechapel past Shoreditch to Barbican Street is claimed by Powell Prophet's Gang. Their lair is above a tavern called the Spanish Pouch on Broad Street near Carpenter’s Hall.

NPCs:
Powell Prophet (A rarely seen figure of legend)
Leonard Dimmock (A psychopath)
Abigail Brinkhurst (A burglar)
Also Winnifred Radley, Bartholomew Dinley, Mistresses Honeysuckle and Dainty (Doxies)

Features: Ambitious, cruel, disorganized

Allies: Those succulent emissaries of Venus, the Bawdy Baskets.

Enemies: The whore-poxed Coves, the scullionly Cuffins.
Situation: The Prophets have more enemies than friends, and their friends are steadily growing in power and influence. The rich ground of the Royal Exchange, currently in the hands of the Coves, would balance things in the Prophet's favor, and seizing it is their chief aim.

Fenchurch Foisters

The Foisters are a small gang that claims East-Central London. They haunt the Bell tavern on Fenchurch Street in the heart of their tiny territory and serve as a sort of king-maker between the Cheapside Coves and Powell Prophet's Gang, both of whom need allies in a quest to lock down the Royal Exchange. The Foisters control Leadenhall, but only weakly—the Prophet's territory ends at Leadenhall's doorstep.

NPCs:
Long Greene, organizer of people and things
Stephana Roach, organizer of time and money
Jeremy Coddington, would-be actor and murderer
Also Also Barbara Dove, Gerome Brimmish, Fanciful (A lady of substance)

Features: Scheming, inventive, doomed

Allies: Coves and Prophets, alternately.
Enemies: Prophets and Coves, alternately.
Situation: The Foisters know their position is tenuous and a wrong move could lead to disaster. While playing the Coves and the Prophets against each other, they look to their neighbors to the east, the Bawdy Baskets, for support and alliance. Enmeshing themselves in the Bawdy's schemes in hopes of picking up the scraps may be the least bad choice they can make. To everyone else in the underworld, it is obvious that the writing is on the wall for the Foisters.

Cheapside Coves

The territory of the Cheapside Coves extends through central London from Cripplegate down past Watling Street to the Mermaid tavern, traditionally neutral ground between their claims and those of the Copesmates. It reaches St. Paul's (also neutral ground, this time with the Cuffins) to the west and the Royal Exchange in the east. The Coves' control of the Royal Exchange is hotly contested with their fiercest rival, Powell Prophet's Gang.

Coves can often be found in a brothel named and operated by Jenny Cardoon, built into the city wall near Cripplegate.

NPCs:
Edmund Dunn, a singing man
Parrett and Bragg, murderers

Wolstan Fineux, con artist
Dr. Simon Forman, physician and lothario
Also Eale Frost, Lambert la Barre, Pinchwife (A drunkard)

Features: Ostentatious, proud, tight-knit

Allies: The Foisters, sometimes.
Enemies: The cowardly Cuffins, the Jordan-licking Prophets.
Situation: The Coves have powerful enemies on both sides and sit on the rich mercantile heart of London like a dragon on its horde. They need an alliance, and the Copesmates seem like the best option. Initial meetings at the Mermaid have gone well, but awkwardly, the Coves are a bigger, meaner gang than the Copesmates.

West Side Cuffins

The Cuffins claim West London and some wealthy, exclusive districts. Their territory includes everything outside the city west of Cripplegate, including the Strand and Drury Lane, as well as territory inside the city south to the river at Dorset Stairs and east as far as St. Paul's, traditionally neutral ground separating their claims from those of the Cheapside Coves. The Cuffins own and operate the Bel Savage Inn through intermediaries, and it is the nexus of their vast operations.

NPCs:
John Nill, friend of the powerful and aggrieved
Humphrey Jeffes, seller of kites
Lady Mild, neither lady nor mild
Also Christian Jenny, Edgecombe Gull, Henry Horner (A philanderer)

Features: Well-connected, quiet, efficient

Allies: The Copesmates (but not really), the Bawdy Baskets.
Enemies: The God-forsaken Coves, the pig-swiving Prophets.
Situation: The Cuffins are currently in the planning stages of a monumental backstabbing of their allies, the Copesmates, in conjunction with a new alliance with the Bawdy Baskets that will lock down control of the Thames between them.

Special "Gangs"

Tribunatus
Robert Cecil's personal gang, led by Cleve Jenney.
Tribunatus claims no specific territory beyond Salisbury House, but they can be found anywhere and everywhere. Members are known to frequent the ominously named Devil's Tavern, outside the city walls east of St. Mary's Church. They are a small, intensely loyal and extremely skillful

group of people who do Cecil's "necessary work" beyond the propriety or beneath the dignity of Her Majesty's government. Less intelligence agents and more the sort of people you might accidentally encounter robbing the same residence, with potentially lethal results.

Læva Dei

Lettice Knollys, 57, is the cousin of Queen Elizabeth. Once Her Majesty's dear friend, the self-styled "Lady Leicester" has long since been banished from the court for marrying Elizabeth's favorite, Robert Dudley. Now both her current husband, Sir Christopher Blount, and son, Robert Devereux, Second Earl of Essex, are under house arrest and closely watched by the Queen's agents. A conspiracy to depose Elizabeth and replace her with Mary, Queen of Scots, is brewing, and Lettice Knollys is doing her part. Dismissed as a fading has-been, unmoored from the royal court, she is in the perfect position to further her family's aims and achieve personal revenge. To this end she has founded "Laeva Dei," the Left Hand of God, a secret society of Catholics and opportunists working in parallel with whatever plans Essex is hatching, but completely insulated from them. Anyone might be a tool of Laeva Dei, possibly through a third party.

On Prostitution

A disputation between Laurence, a foist, and fair Nan (whether a whore or a thief is most prejudicial) from Robert Greene's "Disputation Between a He Coney-Catcher, and a She Coney-Catcher". Modernized and edited by me.

Laurence: Nan! Well met! What news about your Vine Court that you look so blythe? Your cherry cheeks discover your good fare, and your brave apparel betrays a fat purse. Is Fortune now lately grown so favorable to foists that your husband hath lighted on some large purchase? Or hath your smooth looks linked in some young novice to sweat for a favor? All the bite in his purse and to leave himself as many crowns as thou hast good conditions, and then he shall be one of Pierce Penniless fraternity? How is it, sweet wench? Goes the world on wheels that you tread so daintily on your tip-toes?

Nan: Why Laurence, are you pleasant or peevish, that you quip with such brief girds? Think you a quartering wind cannot make a quick sail, that easy lists cannot make heavy burdens, that women have not wiles to compass crowns as well as men? Yes, and more, for though they be not so strong in the fists, they be more ripe in their wits, and 'tis by wit that I live and will live, in spite of that peevish scholar that thought with his coney-catching books to have cross-bit our trade. Dost thou marvel to see me thus brisked? Fair wenches cannot want favors while the world is so full of amorous fools, where can such girls as myself be blemished with a threadbare coat, as long as country farmers have full purses, and wanton citizens pockets full of pence.

Laurence: Truth if fortune so favor thy husband, that he be neither smoked nor cloyed, for I am sure all thy bravery comes by his nipping, foisting, and lifting.

Nan: In faith sir no! Did I get no more by mine own wit then I reap by his purchase, I might both go bare and penniless the whole year. Circe had never more charms, Calipso more enchantments the sirens more subtle tunes, then I haue crafty slights to inveigle a coney, and fetch in a country farmer. Laurence believe me, you men are but fools. Your getting is uncertain, and yet you still fish for the gallows, though by some great chance you light upon a good purse, yet you fast a great while after. Whereas, as we mad wenches have our tenants (for so I call every simple lecher and amorous fox) as well out-of-term as in-term to bring us our rents. Alas, were not my wits and my wanton pranks more profitable then my husband's foisting, we might often go to bed supperless for want of surfeit. And yet I dare swear, my husband gets a hundred pounds a year by purses.

Names

100 Men's Names

Adam
Alban
Alexander
Ambrose
Andrew
Anthony
Antony
Archibald
Arthur
Augustine
Barnaby
Barnard
Bartholomew
Bartram
Benedict
Benjamin
Brian
Charles
Christian
Christopher
Cleeve
Clement
Cornelius
Cuthbert
Daniel
David
Dennis
Edmund
Edward
Elias
Elisha
Erasmus
Esau
Esdras
Evered
Ezekiel
Florence
Francis
Gabriel
Galwell
Garret
Geoffrey
George
Gilbert
Giles
Godfrey
Gregory
Harry
Henry
Hugh
Hugo
Humphrey
Isaac
Jacob
James
Jeremy
Jerome
John
Joseph
Jude
Julian
Lambert
Lawrence
Leonard
Lewis
Lionel
Mark
Martin
Matthew
Michael
Myles
Nathan
Nathaniel
Ned
Ned
Nicholas
Oliver
Osmund
Peter
Philip
Powell
Ralph
Richard
Robert
Robin
Roger
Roland
Sampson
Samuel
Simon
Stephen
Thomas
Timothy
Titus
Tobias
Tom
Vincent
Walter
William
Wolstan

100 Women's names

Abigail
Agnes
Alice
Amphillis
Amy
Ann
Annabel
Anthonye
Audrey
Avis
Barbara
Beatrice
Benedicta
Bess
Betella
Bethia
Bethsabe
Blythe
Bridget
Christabell
Christian
Cicely
Clare
Constance
Deborah
Denise
Diana
Dorcas
Dorothy
Eale
Edeva
Edony
Eleanor
Elizabeth
Ellen
Emma
Esther
Eylmer
Faith
Fortune
Frances
Gillian
Good
Grace
Grissell
Hannah
Helen
Holwice
Honor
Isabell
Jane
Jennet
Joan
Joyce
Judith
Jate
Katherine
Kitty
Lettice
Love
Lucy
Lydia
Mabel
Margaret
Margery
Marian
Mariella
Martha
Mary
Mathaye
Maud
Meg
Mildred
Millicent
Molly
Myrna
Olive
Parnell
Patience
Philippa
Phoebe
Pleasance
Priscilla
Prudence
Rachel
Rebecca
Rose
Ruth
Sarah
Stephana
Susan
Sybil
Temperance
Thomasin
Unice
Ursula
Waitstill
Winifred
Wyborough
Zephora

100 Surnames

Ackworth
Aldebourne
Allington
Ashenhurst
Barefoot
Berwick
Bladewell
Blodwell
Boston
Bradstone
Brimmish
Brinkhurst
Brocksby
Cardiff
Chandler
Cobb
Coffin
Coppinger
Cressy
Crugg
Culpepper
Curzon
Dencourt
Dimmock
Dinley
Dove
Dryland
Edgcombe
Emerson
Engham
Engleford
Everard
Fabian
Feversham
Fineux
Fitzlewis
Flexney
Frith
Froste
Furnace
Grimbald
Grove
Haddock
Harleston
Harvey
Hatch
Henshawe
Hitchcock
Holland
Hornley
Hosteler
Hussey
Inwood
Jenney
Justice
King
Kitson
Knell
La Barre
La Halles
La Penne
Lambton
Leech
Littlebury
Loddington
London
Makepiece
Meeks
Mugg
Norwood
Oxenbrigg
Papley
Peacock
Piggott
Plessey
Prophet
Pursglove
Quintin
Radley
Ratcliff
Ringer
Rolleston
Shawe
Shiveley
Skipwith
Stubb
Switt
Tame
Topsfield
Twarby
Underhill
Verney
Vinter
Wake
Widdowson
Wolfden
Wren
Wyatt
Yaxley
Young

Flemish names

Agniet
Cordula
Desmona
Elientje
Fabiola
Hanne
Marjam
Petronella
Zeunia
Wanne
Rachel

Maria
Jan
Pieter
Adrian
Joos
Jacob
Anthone
Cornelis
Jacques
Frans
Guilliaume
Willebrodus

Raphael
Van Der Baert
Danwyck
Hasebroeck
Lockhenburch
Nieuwkercke
Van Rouf
Vermoen
Zorghere
Van Der Heyde
Van Dale
Vander Lare

Portuguese Names

Bernaldo
Lope
Martim
João
Antonio
Francisco
Pero
Diogo
Manuel
Alfonso
Nuno
Luis

Violante
Guymar
Isabel
Branca
Catalina
Mayor
Maria
Beatriz
Costança
Enes
Lionor
Tareija

Nunez
d'Allmeida
Botelho
Correa
Brandam
d'Atayde
da Cunha
Fogaça
da Costa
Alvarez
Lopez
Gonçallves